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THE DEERSLAYER.

VOL. II.

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THE

DEERSLAYER:

A TALE.

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"What Terrors round him wait!
Amazement in his van, with Flight combined,
And Sorrow's faded form, and Solitude behind."

GRAY.

KX. c. 408

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL II.

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THE

DEERSLAYER.

CHAPTER I.

"The great King of kings
Hath in the table of his law commanded,
That thou shalt do no murder.
Take heed; for he holds vengeance in his hand,
To hurl upon their heads that break his law."

SHAKSPEARE.

THAT the party to which Hist compulsorily belonged was not one that was regularly on the war-path, was evident by the presence of females. It was a small fragment of a tribe that had been hunting and fishing within the English limits, where it was found by the commencement of hostilities, and, after passing the winter and spring by living on what was strictly the property of its enemies, it chose to strike a hostile blow before it finally retired. There was also deep Indian sagacity in the manœuvre

which had led them so far into the territory of their foes. When the runner arrived who announced the breaking out of hostilities between the English and French—a struggle that was certain to carry with it all the tribes that dwelt within the influence of the respective belligerents—this particular party of the Iroquois were posted on the shores of the Oneida, a lake that lies some fifty miles nearer to their own frontier than that which is the scene of our tale. To have fled in a direct line for the Canadas would have exposed them to the dangers of a direct pursuit; and the chiefs had determined to adopt the expedient of penetrating deeper into a region that had now become dangerous, in the hope of being able to retire in the rear of their pursuers, instead of having them on their trail. The presence of the women had induced the attempt at this *ruse*; the strength of these feebler members of the party being unequal to the effort of escaping from the pursuit of warriors. When the reader remembers the vast extent of the American wilderness, at that early day, he will perceive that it was possible for even a tribe to remain months undiscovered in particular portions of it; nor was the danger of encountering a foe, the usual pre-

cautions being observed, as great in the woods, as it is on the high seas in a time of active warfare.

The encampment being temporary, it offered to the eye no more than the rude protection of a bivouac, relieved in some slight degree by the ingenious expedients which suggested themselves to the readiness of those who passed their lives amid similar scenes. One fire, that had been kindled against the roots of a living oak, sufficed for the whole party; the weather being too mild to require it for any purpose but cooking. Scattered around this centre of attraction were some fifteen or twenty low huts—perhaps kennels would be a better word—into which their different owners crept at night, and which were also intended to meet the exigencies of a storm. These little huts were made of the branches of trees, put together with some ingenuity, and they were uniformly topped with bark that had been stripped from fallen trees; of which every virgin forest possesses hundreds in all stages of decay. Of furniture, they had next to none. Cooking utensils of the simplest sort were lying near the fire; a few articles of clothing were to be seen in, or around the huts; rifles, horns, and pouches

leaned against the trees, or were suspended from the lower branches; and the carcases of two or three deer were stretched to view on the same natural shambles.

As the encampment was in the midst of a dense wood, the eye could not take in its *tout ensemble* at a glance; but hut after hut started out of the gloomy picture, as one gazed about him in quest of objects. There was no centre, unless the fire might be so considered—no open area where the possessors of this rude village might congregate; but all was concealed, dark, covert, and cunning, like its owners. A few children strayed from hut to hut, giving the spot a little the air of domestic life; and the suppressed laugh, and low voices of the women occasionally broke in upon the deep stillness of the sombre forest. As for the men, they either ate, slept, or examined their arms. They conversed but little, and then usually apart, or in groups withdrawn from the females; whilst an air of untiring, innate watchfulness and apprehension of danger seemed to be blended even with their slumbers.

As the two girls came near the encampment, Hetty uttered a slight exclamation, on catching a view of the person of her father. He was

seated on the ground with his back to a tree, and Hurry stood near him, indolently whittling a twig. Apparently they were as much at liberty as any others in or about the camp; and one unaccustomed to Indian usages would have mistaken them for visitors, instead of supposing them to be captives. Wah-ta!-Wah led her new friend quite near them, and then modestly withdrew, that her own presence might be no restraint on her feelings. But Hetty was not sufficiently familiar with caresses, or outward demonstrations of fondness, to indulge in any outbreaking of feeling. She merely approached and stood at her father's side without speaking, resembling a silent statue of filial affection. The old man expressed neither alarm, nor surprise at her sudden appearance. In these particulars he had caught the stoicism of the Indians; well knowing that there was no more certain mode of securing their respect than by imitating their self-command. Nor did the savages themselves betray the least sign of emotion at this sudden appearance of a stranger among them. In a word, this arrival produced much less visible sensation, though occurring under circumstances so peculiar, than would be seen in a

village of higher pretensions to civilization, did an ordinary traveller drive up to the door of its principal inn. Still a few warriors collected, and it was evident, by the manner in which they glanced at Hetty as they conversed together, that she was the subject of their discourse, and probably that the reasons of her unlooked-for appearance were matters of discussion. This phlegm of manner is characteristic of the North American Indian—some say of his white successor also—but, in this case, much should be attributed to the peculiar situation in which the party was placed. The force in the ark, the presence of Chingachgook excepted, was well known, no tribe or body of troops was believed to be near, and vigilant eyes were posted round the entire lake, watching day and night, the slightest movement of those whom it would not be exaggerated now to term the besieged.

Hutter was inwardly much moved by the conduct of Hetty, though he affected so much indifference of manner. He recollected her gentle appeal to him, before he left the ark, and misfortune rendered that of weight, which might have been forgotten amid the triumph of success. Then he knew the simple, single-hearted fidelity of this child, and understood

why she had come, and the total disregard of self that reigned in all her acts.

"This is not well, Hetty," he said, deprecating the consequences to the girl herself, more than any other evil. "These are fierce Iroquois, and as little apt to forget an injury, as a favour."

"Tell me, father," returned the girl, looking furtively about her, as if fearful of being overheard, "did God let you do the cruel errand on which you came? I want much to know this, that I may speak to the Indians plainly, if he did not."

"You should not have come hither, Hetty; these brutes will not understand your nature, or your intentions!"

"How was it, father? neither you, nor Hurry seem to have any thing that looks like scalps."

"If that will set your mind at peace, child, I can answer you, no. I had caught the young creatur' who came here with you, but her screeches soon brought down upon me a troop of the wild-cats, that was too much for any single Christian to withstand. If that will do you any good, we are as innocent of having taken a scalp this time, as I make no doubt we shall also be innocent of receiving the bounty."

"Thank you for that, father! Now I can speak boldly to the Iroquois, and with an easy conscience. I hope, Hurry too, has not been able to harm any of the Indians?".

"Why, as to that matter, Hetty," returned the individual in question, "you 've put it pretty much in the nat*y*ve character of the religious truth. Hurry has not been *able*, and that is the long and short of it. I've seen many squalls, old fellow, both on land and on the water, but never did I feel one as lively and as snappish as that which come down upon us, night afore last, in the shape of an Indian hurrah-boys! Why, Hetty, you're no great matter at a reason, or an idee that lies a little deeper than common; but you're human, and have some human notions;—now, I'll just ask you to look at these circumstances. Here was old Tom, your father, and myself, bent on a legal operation, as is to be seen in the words of the law and the proclamation, thinking no harm; when we were set upon by critturs that were more like a pack of hungry wolves, than mortal savages even, and there they had us tethered like two sheep, in less time than it has taken me to tell you the story."

"You are free now, Hurry," returned Hetty, glancing timidly at the fine unfettered limbs of

the young giant. "You have no cords, or withes, to pain your arms, or legs, now."

"Not I, Hetty. Natur' is natur', and free-dom is natur,' too. My limbs have a free look, but that's pretty much the amount of it, sin' I can't use them in the way I should like. Even these trees have eyes; ay, and tongues, too; for was the old man here, or I, to start one single rod beyond our gaol limits, sarvice would be put on the bail afore we could 'gird up our loins' for a race; and, like as not, four or five rifle-bullets would be travelling after us, carrying so many invitations to curb our impatience. There isn't a gaol in the Colony as tight as this we are now in; for I've tried the vartue of two or three on 'em, and I know the mater'als they are made of, as well as the men that made 'em; takin' down being the next step in schoolin' to puttin' up, in all such fabrications."

Lest the reader should get an exaggerated opinion of Hurry's demerits, from this boastful and indiscreet revelation, it may be well to say that his offences were confined to assaults and batteries, for several of which he had been imprisoned, when, as he has just said, he often escaped by demonstrating the flimsiness of the

constructions in which he was confined, by opening for himself doors, in spots where the architects had neglected to place them But Hetty had no knowledge of gaols, and little of the nature of crime, beyond what her unadulterated and almost instinctive perceptions of right and wrong taught her, and this sally of the rude being who had spoken, was lost upon her. She understood his general meaning, however, and answered in reference to that alone.

"It's so best, Hurry," she said. "It is best father and you should be quiet and peaceable till I have spoken to the Iroquois, when all will be well and happy. I don't wish either of you to follow, but leave me to myself. As soon as all is settled, and you are at liberty to go back to the castle, I will come and let you know it."

Hetty spoke with so much simple earnestness, seemed so confident of success, and wore so high an air of moral feeling and truth, that both the listeners felt more disposed to attach an importance to her mediation, than might otherwise have happened. When she manifested an intention to quit them, therefore, they offered no obstacle, though they saw she

was about to join the group of chiefs who were consulting apart, seemingly on the manner and motive of her own sudden appearance.

When Hist—for so we love best to call her —quitted her companion, she strayed near one or two of the elder warriors, who had shown her most kindness in her captivity,—the principal man of whom, had even offered to adopt her as his child, if she would consent to become a Huron. In taking this direction, the shrewd girl did so to invite inquiry. She was too well trained in the habits of her people to obtrude the opinions of one of her sex and years on men and warriors; but nature had furnished a tact and ingenuity that enabled her to attract the attention she desired, without wounding the pride of those whom it was her duty to defer to and respect. Even her affected indifference stimulated curiosity; and Hetty had hardly reached the side of her father, before the Delaware girl was brought within the circle of the warriors by a secret but significant gesture. Here she was questioned as to the presence of her companion, and the motives that had brought her to the camp. This was all that Hist desired. She explained the manner in which she had detected the weakness of

Hetty's reason, rather exaggerating than lessening the deficiency in her intellect; and then she related, in general terms, the object of the girl in venturing among her enemies. The effect was all that the speaker expected; her account investing the person and character of their visitor with a sacredness and respect that she well knew would prove her protection. As soon as her own purpose was attained, Hist withdrew to a distance, where, with female consideration, and a sisterly tenderness, she set about the preparation of a meal that was to be offered to her new friend, as soon as the latter might be at liberty to partake of it. While thus occupied, however, the ready girl in no degree relaxed in her watchfulness; noting every change of countenance among the chiefs, every movement of Hetty, and the smaller occurrences that could be likely to affect her own interests, or that of her new friend.

As Hetty approached the chiefs, they opened their little circle, with an ease and deference of manner that would have done credit to men of more courtly origin. A fallen tree lay near, and the oldest of the warriors made a quiet sign for the girl to be seated on it, taking his

place at her side with the gentleness of a father. The others arranged themselves around the two with grave dignity; and then the girl, who had sufficient observation to perceive that such a course was expected of her, began to reveal the object of her visit. The moment she opened her mouth to speak, however, the old chief gave a gentle sign for her to forbear, said a few words to one of his juniors, and then waited in silent patience until the latter had summoned Hist to the party. This interruption proceeded from the chief's having discovered that there existed a necessity for an interpreter; few of the Hurons present understanding the English language, and they but imperfectly.

Wah-ta !-Wah was not sorry to be called upon to be present at the interview, and least of all in the character in which she was now wanted. She was aware of the hazards she ran in attempting to deceive one or two of the party; but was none the less resolved to use every means that offered; and to practise every artifice that an Indian education could supply, to conceal the facts of the vicinity of her betrothed, and of the errand on which he had come. One unpractised in the expedients and

opinions of savage life, would not have suspected the readiness of invention, the wariness of action, the high resolution, the noble impulses, the deep self-devotion, and the feminine disregard of self, where the affections were concerned, that lay concealed beneath the demure looks, the mild eye, and the sunny smiles of this young Indian beauty. As she approached them, the grim old warrior regarded her with pleasure; for they had a secret pride in the hope of engrafting so rare a scion on the stock of their own nation; adoption being as regularly practised, and as distinctly recognized among the tribes of America, as it ever had been among those nations that submit to the sway of the civil law.

As soon as Hist was seated by the side of Hetty, the old chief desired her to ask "the fair young pale-face" what had brought her among the Iroquois, and what they could do to serve her.

"Tell them, Hist, who I am—Thomas Hutter's youngest daughter; Thomas Hutter, the oldest of their two prisoners; he who owns the castle and the ark, and who has the best right to be thought the owner of these hills, and that lake, since he has dwelt so long, and trapped

so long, and fished so long, among them. They'll know whom you mean by Thomas Hutter, if you tell them *that*. And then tell them that I've come here to convince them they ought not to harm father and Hurry, but let them go in peace, and to treat them as brothers rather than as enemies. Now tell them all this plainly, Hist, and fear nothing for yourself or me; God will protect us."

Wah-ta!-Wah did as the other desired; taking care to render the words of her friend as literally as possible into the Iroquois tongue, a language she used with a readiness almost equal to that with which she spoke her own. The chiefs heard this opening explanation, with grave decorum; the two who had a little knowledge of English, intimating their satisfaction with the interpreter, by furtive but significant glances of the eyes.

"And now, Hist," continued Hetty, as soon as it was intimated to her that she might proceed; "and now, Hist, I wish you to tell these red men, word for word, what I am about to say. Tell them first, that father and Hurry came here with an intention to take as many scalps as they could; for the wicked governor and the province have offered money for

scalps; whether of warriors or women, men or children; and the love of gold was too strong for their hearts to withstand it. Tell them this, dear Hist, just as you have heard it from me, word for word."

Wah-ta!-Wah hesitated about rendering this speech as literally as had been desired; but detecting the intelligence of those who understood English, and apprehending even a greater knowledge than they actually possessed, she found herself compelled to comply. Contrary to what a civilized man would have expected, the admission of the motives and of the errands of their prisoners, produced no visible effect on either the countenance or the feelings of the listeners. They probably considered the act meritorious, and that which neither of them would have hesitated to perform in his own person, he would not be apt to censure in another.

"And now, Hist," resumed Hetty, as soon as she perceived that her first speeches were understood by the chiefs; "you can tell them more. They know that father and Hurry did not succeed; and therefore they can bear them no grudge for any harm that has been done. If they had slain their children and wives, it

would not alter the matter; and I'm not certain that what I am about to tell them would not have more weight had there been mischief done. But ask them first, Hist, if they know there is a God who reigns over the whole earth, and is ruler and chief of all who live, let them be red or white, or what colour they may?"

Wah-ta!-Wah looked a little surprised at this question; for the idea of the Great Spirit is seldom long absent from the mind of an Indian girl. She put the question as literally as possible, however, and received a grave answer in the affirmative.

"This is right," continued Hetty, "and my duty will now be light. This Great Spirit, as you call our God, has caused a book to be written, that we call a Bible; and in this book have been set down all his commandments, and his holy will and pleasure, and the rules by which all men are to live, and directions how to govern the thoughts even, and the wishes, and the will. Here, this is one of these holy books, and you must tell the chiefs what I am about to read to them from its sacred pages."

As Hetty concluded, she reverently unrolled

a small English Bible from its envelope of coarse calico, treating the volume with the sort of external respect that a Romanist would be apt to show to a religious relic. As she slowly proceeded in her task, the grim warriors watched each movement with riveted eyes; and when they saw the little volume appear, a slight expression of surprise escaped one or two of them. But Hetty held it out towards them in triumph, as if she expected the sight would produce a visible miracle; and then, without betraying either surprise or mortification at the stoicism of the Indian, she turned eagerly to her new friend, in order to renew the discourse.

"This is the sacred volume, Hist," she said, "and these words, and lines, and verses, and chapters, all came from God!"

"Why the Great Spirit no send book to Indian, too?" demanded Hist, with the directness of a mind that was totally unsophisticated.

"Why?" answered Hetty, a little bewildered by a question so unexpected. "Why? —Ah! you know the Indians don't know how to read."

If Hist was not satisfied with this explanation, she did not deem the point of sufficient

importance to be pressed. Simply bending her body in gentle admission of the truth of what she heard, she sat patiently awaiting the further arguments of the pale-face enthusiast.

"You can tell these chiefs, that throughout this book, men are ordered to forgive their enemies, to treat them as they would brethren, and never to injure their fellow-creatures, more especially on account of revenge or any evil passion. Do you think you can tell them this, so that they will understand it, Hist?"

"Tell him well enough; but he no very easy to understand."

Hist then conveyed the ideas of Hetty, in the best manner she could, to the attentive Indians, who heard her words with some such surprise as an American of our own times would be apt to betray at a suggestion that the great modern but vacillating ruler of things human, public opinion, might be wrong. One or two of their number, however, having met with missionaries said a few words in explanation, and then the group gave all its attention to the communications that were to follow. Before Hetty resumed, she inquired earnestly of Hist if the chiefs had understood her, and

receiving an evasive answer, was fain to be satisfied.

"I will now read to the warriors some of the verses that it is good for them to know," continued the girl, whose manner grew more solemn and earnest as she proceeded; "and they will remember that they are the very words of the Great Spirit. First, then, ye are commanded to '*Love thy neighbour as thyself.*' Tell them *that*, dear Hist."

"Neighbour for Indian, no mean pale-face," answered the Delaware girl, with more decision than she had hitherto thought it necessary to use. "Neighbour mean Iroquois for Iroquois, Mohican for Mohican, pale-face for pale-face. No need tell chief any thing else."

"You forget, Hist, these are the words of the Great Spirit, and the chiefs must obey them as well as others. Here is another commandment: '*Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.*'"

"What that mean?" demanded Hist with the quickness of lightning.

Hetty explained that it was an order not to resent injuries, but rather to submit to receive fresh wrongs from the offender.

"And hear this, too, Hist," she added,

"'*Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.*'"

By this time Hetty had become excited; her eye gleamed with the earnestness of her feelings, her cheeks flushed, and her voice, usually so low and modulated, became stronger and more impressive. With the Bible she had been early made familiar by her mother; and she now turned from passage to passage, with surprising rapidity, taking care to cull such verses as taught the sublime lessons of Christian charity and Christian forgiveness. To translate half she said, in her pious earnestness, Wah-ta!-Wah would have found impracticable, had she made the effort; but wonder held her tongue-tied, equally with the chiefs; and the young, simple-minded enthusiast had fairly become exhausted with her own efforts, before the other opened her mouth again to utter a syllable. Then, indeed, the Delaware girl gave a brief translation of the substance of what had been both read and said, confining herself to one or two of the more striking of the verses, those that had struck her own imagination as the most paradoxical, and which certainly would have been

the most applicable to the case, could the uninstructed minds of the listeners embrace the great moral truths they conveyed.

It will be scarcely necessary to tell the reader the effect that such novel duties would be likely to produce among a group of Indian warriors, with whom it was a species of religious principle never to forget a benefit, or to forgive an injury. Fortunately, the previous explanations of Hist had prepared the minds of the Hurons for something extravagant; and most of that which to them seemed inconsistent and paradoxical, was accounted for by the fact that the speaker possessed a mind that was constituted differently from those of most of the human race. Still there were one or two old men who had heard similar doctrines from the missionaries, and they felt a desire to occupy an idle moment by pursuing a subject that they found so curious.

"This is the Good Book of the pale-faces," observed one of these chiefs, taking the volume from the unresisting hand of Hetty, who gazed anxiously at his face while he turned the leaves, as if she expected some visible results from the circumstance. "This is the law by which my white brethren profess to live?"

Hist, to whom this question was addressed,

if it might be considered as addressed to any one in particular, answered simply in the affirmative; adding that both the French of the Canadas, and the Yengeese of the British provinces equally admitted its authority, and affected to revere its principles.

"Tell my young sister," said the Huron, looking directly at Hist, "that I will open my mouth and say a few words."

"The Iroquois chief go to speak—my pale-face friend listen," said Hist.

"I rejoice to hear it!" exclaimed Hetty. "God has touched his heart, and he will now let father and Hurry go!"

"This is the pale-face law," resumed the chief. "It tells him to do good to them that hurt him; and when his brother asks him for his rifle, to give him the powder-horn too. Such is the pale-face law?"

"Not so—not so," answered Hetty earnestly, when these words had been interpreted. "There is not a word about rifles in the whole book; and powder and bullets give offence to the Great Spirit."

"Why, then, does the pale-face use them? If he is ordered to *give* double to him that asks only for one thing, why does he *take* double from the poor Indians, who ask for *no* thing?

He comes from beyond the rising sun, with his book in his hand, and he teaches the red-man to read it; but why does he forget, himself, all it says? When the Indian gives, he is never satisfied; and now he offers gold for the scalps of our women and children, though he calls us beasts if we take the scalp of a warrior killed in open war. My name is 'Rivenoak."

When Hetty had got this formidable question fairly presented to her mind in the translation, and Hist did her duty with more than usual readiness, on this occasion, it scarcely need be said that she was sorely perplexed. Abler heads than that of this poor girl have frequently been puzzled by questions of a similar drift; and it is not surprising, that with all her own earnestness and sincerity, she did not know what answer to make.

"What shall I tell them, Hist?" she asked imploringly; "I *know* that all I have read from the book is true; and yet it wouldn't seem to be so, would it, by the conduct of those to whom the book was given?"

"Give 'em pale-face reason," returned Hist, ironically; "that always good for one side; though he bad for t'other."

"No, no, Hist, there can't be two sides to

truth—and yet it does seem strange! I'm certain I have read the verses right, and no one would be so wicked as to print the word of God wrong. *That* can never be, Hist."

"Well, to poor Indian girl, it seem every thing *can* be to pale-faces;" returned the other, coolly. "One time 'ey say white, and one time 'ey say black. Why, then, *never can be?*"

Hetty was more and more embarrassed, until, overcome with the apprehension that she had failed in her object, and that the lives of her father and Hurry would be the forfeit of some blunder of her own, she burst into tears. From that moment, the manner of Hist lost all its irony and cool indifference, and she became the fond caressing friend again. Throwing her arms around the afflicted girl, she attempted to soothe her sorrows by the scarcely ever failing remedy of female sympathy.

"Stop cry—no cry," she said, wiping the tears from the face of Hetty, as she would have performed the same office for a child, and stopping to press her, occasionally, to her own warm bosom with the affection of a sister; "why you so trouble? You no make he book, if he be wrong; and you no make he pale-face, if he wicked. There wicked red-man, and

wicked white man—no colour. all good—no colour all wicked. Chiefs know *that* well enough."

Hetty soon recovered from this sudden burst of grief, and then her mind reverted to the purpose of her visit, with all its single-hearted earnestness. Perceiving that the grim-looking chiefs were still standing around her in grave attention, she hoped that another effort to convince them of the right might be successful.

"Listen, Hist," she said, struggling to suppress her sobs, and to speak distinctly; "tell the chiefs that it matters not what the wicked do—right is right—the words of the Great Spirit are the words of the Great Spirit—and no one can go harmless for doing an evil act, because another has done it before him! '*Render good for evil,*' says this book; and that is the law for the red-man as well as for the white man."

"Never hear such a law among Delaware, or among Iroquois," answered Hist, soothingly. "No good to tell chiefs any such law as *that*. Tell 'em somet'ing they believe."

Hist was about to proceed, notwithstanding, when a tap on the shoulder from the finger of the oldest chief caused her to look up. She

then perceived that one of the warriors had left the group, and was already returning to it with Hutter and Hurry. Understanding that the two last were to become parties in the inquiry, she became mute, with the unhesitating obedience of an Indian woman. In a few seconds, the prisoners stood face to face with the principal men of the captors.

"Daughter," said the senior chief to the young Delaware, "ask this greybeard why he came into our camp?"

The question was put by Hist in her own imperfect English, but in a way that was easy to be understood. Hutter was too stern and obdurate by nature to shrink from the consequences of any of his acts, and he was also too familiar with the opinions of the savages not to understand that nothing was to be gained by equivocation, or an unmanly dread of their anger. Without hesitating, therefore, he avowed the purpose with which he had landed, merely justifying it by the fact that the government of the province had bid high for scalps. This frank avowal was received by the Iroquois with evident satisfaction, not so much, however, on account of the advantage it gave them, in a moral point of view, as by proving that they

had captured a man worthy of occupying their thoughts, and of becoming a subject of their revenge. Hurry, when interrogated, confessed the truth, though he would have been more disposed to concealment than his sterner companion, did the circumstances very well admit of its adoption. But he had tact enough to discover that equivocation would be useless, at that moment, and he made a merit of necessity by imitating a frankness, which, in the case of Hutter, was the offspring of habits of indifference, acting on a disposition that was always ruthless and reckless of personal consequences.

As soon as the chiefs had received the answers to their questions they walked away in silence, like men who deemed the matter disposed of, all Hetty's dogmas being thrown away on beings trained in violence from infancy to manhood. Hetty and Hist were now left alone with Hutter and Hurry, no visible restraint being placed on the movements of either; though all four, in fact, were vigilantly and unceasingly watched. As respects the men, care was had to prevent them from getting possession of any of the rifles that lay scattered about, their own included; and there all open

manifestations of watchfulness ceased. But they, who were so experienced in Indian practices, knew too well how great was the distance between appearances and reality, to become the dupes of this seeming carelessness. Although both thought incessantly of the means of escape; and this without concert, each was aware of the uselessness of attempting any project of the sort that was not deeply laid and promptly executed. They had been long enough in the encampment, and were sufficiently observant to have ascertained that Hist also was a sort of captive; and presuming on the circumstance, Hutter spoke in her presence more openly than he might otherwise have thought it prudent to do; inducing Hurry to be equally unguarded by his example.

"I'll not blame you, Hetty, for coming on this errand, which was well meant, if not very wisely planned," commenced the father, seating himself by the side of his daughter and taking her hand; a sign of affection that this rude being was accustomed to manifest to this particular child; "but preaching and the Bible are not the means to turn an Indian from his ways. Has Deerslayer sent any message; or has he any scheme by which he thinks to get us free?"

"Ay, that's the substance of it!" put in Hurry; "if you can help us, gal, to half a mile of freedom, or even a good start of a short quarter, I'll answer for the rest. Perhaps the old man may want a little more, but for one of my height and years, *that* will meet all objections."

Hetty looked distressed, turning her eyes from one to the other; but she had no answer to give to the question of the reckless Hurry.

"Father," she said, "neither Deerslayer nor Judith knew of my coming until I had left the ark. They are afraid the Iroquois will make a raft and try to get off to the hut, and think more of defending *that*, than of coming to aid you."

"No—no—no," said Hist hurriedly, though in a low voice, and with her face bent towards the earth, in order to conceal from those whom she knew to be watching them the fact of her speaking at all. "No, no, no, Deerslayer different man. He no t'ink of defending 'self with a friend in danger. Help one another, and all get to hut."

"This sounds well, old Tom," said Hurry, winking and laughing, though he too used the precaution to speak low. "Give me a ready-witted squaw for a fri'nd, and though I'll not

downright defy an Iroquois, I think I would defy the devil."

"No talk loud," said Hist; "some Iroquois got Yengeese tongue, and all got Yengeese ear."

"Have we a friend in you, young woman?" inquired Hutter, with an increasing interest in the conference. "If so, you may calculate on a solid reward; and nothing will be easier than to send you to your own tribe, if we can once fairly get you off with us to the castle. Give us the ark and the canoes, and we can command the lake, spite of all the savages in the Canadas. Nothing but artillery could drive us out of the castle if we can get back to it."

"S'pose 'ey come ashore to take scalp?" retorted Hist, with cool irony, at which the girl appeared to be more expert than is common for her sex.

"Ay, ay—that was a mistake; but there is little use in lamentations, and less still, young woman, in flings."

"Father," said Hetty, "Judith thinks of breaking open the big chest, in hopes of finding something in *that* which may buy your freedom of the savages."

A dark look came over Hutter, at the

announcement of this fact, and he muttered his dissatisfaction in a way to render it intelligible to all present.

"What for no break open chest?" put in Hist. "Life sweeter than old chest—scalp sweeter than old chest. If no tell darter to break him open, Wah-ta!-wah no help him to run away."

"Ye know not what ye ask—ye are but silly girls, and the wisest way for ye both, is to speak of what ye understand, and to speak of nothing else. I little like this cold neglect of the savages, Hurry; it's a proof that they think of something serious, and if we are to do any thing, we must do it soon. Can we count on this young woman, think you?"

"Listen," said Hist, quickly, and with an earnestness that proved how much her feelings were concerned; "Wah-ta!-wah no Iroquois—all over Delaware—got Delaware heart—Delaware feeling. She prisoner too. One prisoner help t'other prisoner. No good to talk more now. Darter stay with father—Wah-ta!-wah come and see friend—all look right—*then* tell what he do."

This was said in a low voice, but distinctly, and in a manner to make an impression. As

soon as it was uttered, the girl arose and left the group, walking composedly towards the hut she occupied, as if she had no further interest in what might pass between the three pale-faces.

CHAPTER II.

"She speaks much of her father; says she hears
There's tricks i' the world; and hems, and beats her heart;
Spurns enviously at straws; speaks things in doubt,
That carry but half sense; her speech is nothing,
Yet the unsuspected use of it doth move
The hearers to collection;——"

SHAKSPEARE.

We left the occupants of the castle and the ark buried in sleep. Once or twice in the course of the night, it is true, Deerslayer or the Delaware arose, and looked out upon the tranquil lake, when, finding all safe, they returned to their pallets, and slept like men who were not easily deprived of their natural rest. At the first signs of the dawn the former arose, however, and made his personal arrangements for the day; though his companion, whose nights had not been tranquil, or without disturbance of late, continued on his blanket until the sun had fairly risen. Judith, too, was later than common that morning, for the earlier hours of the night had brought her little of

either refreshment or sleep. But ere the sun had shown himself over the eastern hills, these too were up and afoot; even the tardy in that region seldom remaining on their pallets after the appearance of the great luminary.

Chingachgook was in the act of arranging his forest toilet, when Deerslayer entered the cabin of the ark, and threw him a few coarse, but light summer vestments, that belonged to Hutter.

"Judith hath given me them for your use chief," said the latter, as he cast the jacket and trousers at the feet of the Indian; "for it's ag'in all prudence and caution to be seen in your war-dress and paint. Wash off all them fiery streaks from your cheeks, put on these garments, and here is a hat, such as it is, that will give you an awful oncivilized sort of civilization as the missionaries call it. Remember that Hist is at hand, and what we do for the maiden, must be done while we are doing for others. I know it's ag'in your gifts and your natur' to wear clothes, unless they are cut and carried in a red man's fashion, but make a vartue of necessity, and put these on at once, even if they do rise a little in your throat."

Chingachgook, or the Serpent, eyed the

vestments with strong disgust; but he saw the usefulness of the disguise, if not its absolute necessity. Should the Iroquois discover a red-man in or about the castle, it might indeed place them more on their guard, and give their suspicions a direction towards their female captive. Any thing was better than a failure, as it regarded his betrothed, and, after turning the different garments round and round, examining them with a species of grave irony, affecting to draw them on in a way that defeated itself, and otherwise manifesting the reluctance of a young savage to confine his limbs in the usual appliances of civilized life, the chief submitted to the directions of his companion, and finally stood forth, so far as the eye could detect, a red-man in colour alone. Little was to be apprehended from this last peculiarity, however, the distance from the shore and the want of glasses, preventing any very close scrutiny, and Deerslayer himself, though of a brighter and fresher tint, had a countenance that was burnt by the sun to a hue scarcely less red than that of his Mohican companion. The awkwardness of the Delaware in his new attire, caused his friend to smile more than once that day, but he carefully

abstained from the use of any of those jokes which would have been bandied among white men on such an occasion; the habits of a chief, the dignity of a warrior on his first path, and the gravity of the circumstances in which they were placed, uniting to render so much levity out of season.

The meeting at the morning-meal of the three islanders, if we may use the term, was silent, grave, and thoughtful. Judith showed by her looks that she had passed an unquiet night, while the two men had the future before them, with its unseen and unknown events. A few words of courtesy passed between Deerslayer and the girl in the course of the breakfast, but no allusion was made to their situation. At length Judith, whose heart was full, and whose novel feelings disposed her to entertain sentiments more gentle and tender than common, introduced the subject, and this in a way to show how much of her thoughts it had occupied in the course of the last sleepless night.

"It would be dreadful, Deerslayer," the girl abruptly exclaimed, "should any thing serious befal my father and Hetty! We cannot remain quietly here, and leave them in the hands

of the Iroquois without bethinking us of some means of serving them."

"I'm ready, Judith, to sarve them, and all others who are in trouble, could the way to do it be p'inted out. It's no trifling matter to fall into red-skin hands, when men set out on an a'r'n'd like that which took Hutter and Hurry ashore; that I know as well as another; and I wouldn't wish my worst inimy in such a strait, much less them with whom I've journeyed, and eat, and slept. Have you any scheme, that you would like to have the Sarpent and me indivour to carry out?"

"I know of no other means to release the prisoners than by bribing the Iroquois. They are not proof against presents; and we might offer enough perhaps, to make them think it better to carry away what to them will be rich gifts, than to carry away poor prisoners; if, indeed, they should carry them away at all!"

"This is well enough, Judith; yes, it's well enough, if the inimy is to be bought, and we can find articles to make the purchase with. Your father has a convenient lodge, and it is most cunningly placed; though it doesn't seem overstock'd with riches that will be likely to buy his ransom. There's the piece he calls

Killdeer, might count for something, and I understand there's a keg of powder about, which might be a make-weight sartain; and yet two able-bodied men are not to be bought off for a trifle—besides—"

"Besides what?" demanded Judith, impatiently, observing that the other hesitated to proceed, probably from a reluctance to distress her.

"Why, Judith, the Frenchers offer bounties as well as our own side; and the price of two scalps would purchase a keg of powder, and a rifle; though I'll not say one of the latter altogether as good as Killdeer, there, which your father va'nts as oncommon and onequalled, like. But fair powder, and a pretty sartain rifle; and then the red-men are not the expartest in fire arms, and don't always know the difference atwixt that which is ra'al, and that which is seeming."

"This is horrible!" muttered the girl, struck by the homely manner in which her companion was accustomed to state his facts. "But you overlook my own clothes, Deerslayer; and they, I think, might go far with the women of the Iroquois."

"No doubt they would; no doubt they

would, Judith," returned the other, looking at her keenly, as if he would ascertain whether she were really capable of making such a sacrifice. "But are you sartain, gal, you could find it in your heart to part with your own finery for such a purpose? Many is the man who has thought he was valiant till danger stared him in the face; I've known them, too, that consaited they were kind, and ready to give away all they had to the poor, when they've been listening to other people's hard-heartedness; but whose fists have clench'd as tight as the riven hickory, when it came to downright offerings of their own. Besides, Judith, you're handsome—oncommon in that way one might obsarve, and do no harm to the truth; and they that have beauty, like to have that which will adorn it. Are you sartain you could find it in your heart to part with your own finery?"

The soothing allusion to the personal charms of the girl was well-timed, to counteract the effect produced by the distrust that the young man expressed of Judith's devotion to her filial duties. Had another said as much as Deerslayer, the compliment would most probably have been overlooked in the indignation

awakened by the doubts; but even the unpolished sincerity, that so often made this simple-minded hunter bare his thoughts, had a charm for the girl; and, while she coloured, and for an instant her eyes flashed fire, she could not find it in her heart to be really angry with one whose very soul seemed truth and manly kindness. Look her reproaches she did; but conquering the desire to retort, she succeeded in answering in a mild and friendly manner.

"You must keep all your favourable opinions for the Delaware girls, Deerslayer, if you seriously think thus of those of your own colour," she said, affecting to laugh. "But, *try* me; if you find that I regret either riband or feather, silk or muslin, then may you think what you please of my heart, and say what you think."

"That's justice! The rarest thing to find on 'arth, is a truly just man. So says Tamenund, the wisest prophet of the Delawares; and so all must think that have occasion to see, and talk, and act among mankind. I love a just man, Sarpent; his eyes are never covered with darkness towards his inimies, while they are all sunshine and brightness towards his fri'nds. He uses the reason that God has

given him, and he uses it with a feelin' of his being ordered to look at, and to consider things as they *are*, and not as he *wants* them to be. It's easy enough to find men who *call* themselves just; but it's wonderful oncommon to find them that are the thing, in fact. How often have I seen Indians, gal, who believed they were lookin' into a matter agreeable to the will of the Great Spirit, when, in truth, they were only striving to act up to their own will and pleasure, and this, half of the time, with a temptation to go wrong that could no more be seen by themselves, than the stream that runs in the next valley, can be seen by us through yonder mountain; though any looker-on might have discovered it, as plainly as we can discover the parch that are swimming around this hut."

"Very true, Deerslayer," rejoined Judith, losing every trace of displeasure in a bright smile; "very true; and I hope to see you act on this love of justice, in all matters in which I am concerned. Above all, I hope you will judge for yourself, and not believe every evil story that a prating idler, like Hurry Harry, may have to tell, that goes to touch the good name of any young woman who may not

happen to have the same opinions of his face and person that the blustering gallant has of himself."

"Hurry Harry's idees do not pass for gospel with me, Judith; but even worse than he may have eyes and ears," returned the other gravely.

"Enough of this!" exclaimed Judith, with flashing eye, and a flush that mounted to her temples; "and more of my father and his ransome. 'Tis as you say, Deerslayer; the Indians will not be likely to give up their prisoners, without a heavier bribe than my clothes can offer, and father's rifle and powder. There is the chest."

"Ay, there is the chist, as you say, Judith; and when the question gets to be between a secret and a scalp, I should think most men would prefar keeping the last. Did your father ever give you any downright command consarning that chist?"

"Never. He has always appeared to think its locks, and its steel bands, and its strength, its best protection."

"'Tis a rare chist, and altogether of curious build," returned Deerslayer, rising and approaching the thing in question, on which he

seated himself, with a view to examine it with greater ease. "Chingachgook, this is no wood that comes of any forest that you or I have ever trailed through! 'Tis n't the black walnut; and yet it's quite as comely, if not more so, did the smoke and the treatment give it fair play."

The Delaware drew near, felt of the wood, examined its grain, endeavoured to indent the surface with a nail, and passed his hand curiously over the steel bands, the heavy padlocks, and the other novel peculiarities of the sive box.

"No—nothing like this grows in these regions," resumed Deerslayer; "I've seen all the oaks, both the maples, the elms, the basswood, all the walnuts, the butternuts, and every tree that has a substance and colour, wrought into some form or other; but never have I before seen such a wood as this! Judith, the chist itself would buy your father's freedom; or Iroquois cur'osity isn't as strong as red-skin cur'osity, in general; especially in the matter of woods."

"The purchase might be cheaper made, perhaps, Deerslayer. The chest is full, and it would be better to part with half, than to part

with the whole. Besides, father—I know not why—but father values that chest highly."

"He would seem to prize what it holds, more than the chist itself, judging by the manner in which he treats the outside, and secures the inside. Here are three locks, Judith; is there no key?"

"I've never seen one; and yet key there must be, since Hetty told us, *she* had often seen the chest opened."

"Keys no more lie in the air, or float on the water, than humans, gal; if there is a key, there must be a place in which it is kept."

"That is true, and it might not be difficult to find it, did we dare to search!"

"This is for you, Judith; it is altogether for you. The chist is your'n, or your father's; and Hutter is your father, not mine. Cur'osity is a woman's, and not a man's failing; and there you have got all the reasons before you. If the chist has articles for ransom, it seems to me they would be wisely used in redeeming their owner's life, or even in saving his scalp; but that is a matter for your judgment, and not for ourn. When the lawful owner of a trap, or a buck, or a canoe, isn't present, his next of kin becomes his riprisentatyve, by all the laws

of the woods. We, therefore, leave you to say whether the chist shall, or shall not be opened."

"I hope you do not believe I can hesitate when my father's life's in danger, Deerslayer!"

"Why, it's pretty much putting a scolding ag'in tears and mourning. It's not onreasonable to foretell that old Tom may find fault with what you 've done, when he sees himself, once more, in his hut here; but there's nothing unusual in men's falling out with what has been done for their own good; I dare to say that even the moon would seem a different thing from what it does now, could we look at it from the other side."

"Deerslayer, if we can find the key, I will authorize you to open the chest, and to take such things from it, as you may think will buy father's ransom."

"First find the key, gal; we'll talk of the rest a'terwards. Sarpent, you 've eyes like a fly, and a judgment that's seldom out; can you help us in calculating where Floating Tom would be apt to keep the key of a chist that he holds to be as private as this?"

The Delaware had taken no part in the discourse, until he was thus directly appealed to,

when he quitted the chest, which had continued to attract his attention, and cast about him for the place in which a key would be likely to be concealed, under such circumstances. As Judith and Deerslayer were not idle, the while, the whole three were soon engaged in an anxious and spirited search. As it was certain that the desired key was not to be found in any of the common drawers, or closets, of which there were several in the building, none looked there, but all turned their inquiries to those places that struck them as ingenious hiding-places, and more likely to be used for such a purpose. In this manner the outer room was thoroughly but fruitlessly examined; when they entered the sleeping apartment of Hutter. This part of the rude building was better furnished than the rest of the structure; containing several articles that had been especially devoted to the service of the deceased wife of its owner; but as Judith had all the rest of the keys, it was soon rummaged, without bringing to light the particular key desired.

They now entered the bed rooms of the daughters. Chingachgook was immediately struck with the contrast between the articles, and the arrangement of that side of the room

that might be called Judith's, and that which more properly belonged to Hetty. A slight exclamation escaped him, and pointing in each direction, he alluded to the fact in a low voice, speaking to his friend in the Delaware tongue.

"As you think, Sarpent," answered Deerslayer; whose remarks we always translate into English, preserving as much as possible of the peculiar phraseology and manner of the man. "'Tis just so, as any one may see; and 'tis all founded in natur'. One sister loves finery, some say, overmuch; while t'other is as meek and lowly as God ever created goodness and truth. Yet, after all, I dare say that Judith has her vartues, and Hetty has her failin's."

"And the 'Feeble-Mind' has seen the chest opened?" inquired Chingachgook, with curiosity in his glance.

"Sartain; that much I've heard from her own lips; and, for that matter, so have you. It seems her father does'nt misgive *her* discretion, though he does that of his eldest darter."

"Then, the key is hid only from the Wild Rose?" for so Chingachgook had begun gallantly to term Judith in his private discourse with his friend.

"That's it! That's just it! One he trusts,

and the other he doesn't. There's red and white in that, Sarpent; all tribes and nations agreeing in trusting some, and refusing to trust other some. It depends on character and judgment."

"Where could a key be put, so little likely to be found by the Wild Rose, as among coarse clothes?"

Deerslayer started, and turning to his friend, with admiration expressed in every lineament of his face, he fairly laughed, in his silent but hearty manner, at the ingenuity and readiness of the conjecture.

"Your name's well bestowed, Sarpent—yes, 'tis well bestowed! Sure enough, where would a lover of finery be so little likely to s'arch, as among garments as coarse and unseemly as these of poor Hetty. I dares to say, Judith's delicate fingers haven't touched a bit of cloth as rough and oncomely as that petticoat, now, since she first made acquaintance with the officers! Yet, who knows? the key may be as likely to be on the same peg, as in any other place. Take down the garment, Delaware, and let us see if you are ra'ally a prophet."

Chingachgook did as desired, but no key was found. A coarse pocket, apparently empty,

hung on the adjoining peg, and this was next examined. By this time, the attention of Judith was called in that direction, and she spoke hurriedly, and like one who wished to save unnecessary trouble.

"These are only the clothes of poor Hetty, dear simple girl!" she said; "nothing we seek, would be likely to be there."

The words were hardly out of the handsome mouth of the speaker, when Chingachgook drew the desired key from the pocket. Judith was too quick of apprehension, not to understand the reason a hiding-place, so simple and exposed, had been used. The blood rushed to her face, as much with resentment, perhaps, as with shame; and she bit her lip, though she continued silent. Deerslayer and his friend now discovered the delicacy of men of native refinement, neither smiling, or even by a glance betraying how completely he understood the motives and ingenuity of this clever artifice. The former, who had taken the key from the Indian, led the way into the adjoining room, and applying it to a lock, ascertained that the right instrument had actually been found. There were three padlocks, each of which, however, was easily opened by this single key. Deerslayer

removed them all, loosened the hasps, raised the lid a little to make certain it was loose, and then he drew back from the chest, several feet, signing to his friend to follow.

"This is a family chist, Judith," he said, "and 'tis like to hold family secrets. The Sarpent and I will go into the ark, and look to the canoes, and paddles, and oars; while you can examine it by yourself, and find out whether any thing that will be a make-weight in a ransom, is, or is not, among the articles. When you've got through, give us a call, and we'll all sit in council, together, touching the valie of the articles."

"Stop, Deerslayer," exclaimed the girl, as he was about to withdraw; "not a single thing will I touch—I will not even raise the lid—unless you are present. Father and Hetty have seen fit to keep the inside of this chest a secret from me, and I am much too proud to pry into their hidden treasures, unless it were for their own good. But, on no account, will I open the chest alone. Stay with me, then; I want witnesses of what I do."

"I rather think, Sarpent, that the gal is right! Confidence and reliance beget security, but suspicion is like to make us all wary.

Judith has a right to ask us to be present; and should the chist hold any of Master Hutter's secrets, they will fall into the keeping of two as close-mouthed young men as are to be found. We *will* stay with you, Judith—but first let us take a look at the lake and the shore, for this chist will not be emptied in a minute."

The two men now went out on the platform, and Deerslayer swept the shore with the glass, while the Indian gravely turned his eye on the water and the woods, in quest of any sign that might betray the machinations of their enemies. Nothing was visible, and assured of their temporary security, the three collected around the chest again, with the avowed object of opening it.

Judith had held this chest, and its unknown contents, in a species of reverence as long as she could remember. Neither her father, nor her mother ever mentioned it in her presence; and there appeared to be a silent convention, that in naming the different objects that occasionally stood near it or even lay on its lid, care should be had to avoid any allusion to the chest itself. Habit had rendered this so easy, and so much a matter of course, that it was only quite recently, the girl had begun even to

muse on the singularity of the circumstance. But there had never been sufficient intimacy between Hutter and his eldest daughter, to invite confidence. At times, he was kind, but in general, with her more especially, he was stern and morose. Least of all had his authority been exercised in a way to embolden his child to venture on the liberty she was about to take, without many misgivings of the consequences, although the liberty proceeded from a desire to serve himself. Then Judith was not altogether free from a little superstition on the subject of this chest, which had stood a sort of tabooed relic before her eyes, from childhood to the present hour. Nevertheless, the time had come when it would seem that this mystery was to be explained, and that under circumstances, too, which left her very little choice in the matter.

Finding that both her companions were watching her movements in grave silence, Judith placed a hand on the lid and endeavoured to raise it. Her strength, however, was insufficient, and it appeared to the girl, who was fully aware that all the fastenings were removed, that she was resisted in an unhallowed attempt, by some supernatural power.

"I cannot raise the lid, Deerslayer," she said: "had we not better give up the attempt, and find some other means of releasing the prisoners?"

"Not so, Judith; not so, gal. No means are as sartain and easy, as a good bribe," answered the other. "As for the lid, 'tis held by nothing but its own weight, which is prodigious for so small a piece of wood, loaded with iron as it is."

As Deerslayer spoke, he applied his own strength to the effort, and succeeded in raising the lid against the timbers of the house, where he took care to secure it, by a sufficient prop. Judith fairly trembled, as she cast her first glance at the interior; and she felt a temporary relief in discovering that a piece of canvass, that was carefully tucked in, around the edges, effectually concealed all beneath it. The chest was apparently well stored, however, the canvass lying within an inch of the lid.

"Here's a full cargo," said Deerslayer, eyeing the arrangement; "and we had needs go to work leisurely, and at our ease. Sarpent, bring some stools, while I spread this blanket on the floor, and then we'll begin work orderly and in comfort."

The Delaware complied; Deerslayer civilly

placed a stool for Judith, took one himself, and commenced the removal of the canvass covering. This was done deliberately, and in as cautious a manner, as if it were believed that fabrics of a delicate construction lay hidden beneath. When the canvass was removed, the first articles that came in view were some of the habiliments of the male sex. These were of fine materials, and, according to the fashions of the age, were gay in colours, and rich in ornaments. One coat, in particular, was of scarlet, and had button-holes worked in gold thread. Still it was not military, but was part of the attire of a civilian of condition, at a period when social rank was rigidly respected in dress. Chingachgook could not refrain from an exclamation of pleasure, as soon as Deerslayer opened this coat, and held it up to view; for, notwithstanding all his trained self-command, the splendour of the vestment was too much for the philosophy of an Indian. Deerslayer turned quickly, and he regarded his friend with momentary displeasure, as this burst of weakness escaped him; and then he soliloquized, as was his practice, whenever any strong feeling suddenly got the ascendancy.

"'Tis his gift!—yes, 'tis the gift of a red-

skin to love finery, and he is not to be blamed. This is an extr'ornary garment, too; and extr'ornary things get up extr'ornary feelin's. I think this will do, Judith, for the Indian heart is hardly to be found in all America, that can withstand colours like these, and glitter like that. If this coat was ever made for your father, you've come honestly by the taste for finery, you have."

"That coat was never made for father," answered the girl, quickly; "it is much too long; while father is short and square."

"Cloth was plenty, if it was, and glitter cheap," answered Deerslayer, with his silent, joyous laugh. "Sarpent, this garment was made for a man of your size, and I should like to see it on your shoulders."

Chingachgook, nothing loth, submitted to the trial; throwing aside the coarse and thread-bare jacket of Hutter, to deck his person in a coat that was originally intended for a gentleman. The transformation was ludicrous; but as men are seldom struck with incongruities in their own appearance, any more than in their own conduct, the Delaware studied this change in a common glass, by which Hutter was in the habit of shaving, with grave interest. At that

moment he thought of Hist, and we owe it to truth to say, though it may militate a little against the stern character of a warrior to own it, that he wished he could be seen by her, in his present improved aspect.

"Off with it, Sarpent—off with it," resumed the inflexible Deerslayer; "such garments as little become you, as they would become me. Your gifts are for paint, and hawk's feathers, and blankets, and wampum; and mine are for doublets of skin, tough leggings, and sarviceable moccasins. I say moccasins, Judith; for though white, living as I do in the woods, it's necessary to take to some of the practyses of the woods for comfort's sake and cheapness."

"I see no reason, Deerslayer, why one man may not wear a scarlet coat, as well as another," returned the girl. "I wish I could see *you* in this handsome garment."

"See me in a coat fit for a lord! Well, Judith, if you wait till that day, you'll wait until you see me beyond reason and memory. No—no—gal, my gifts are my gifts, and I'll live and die in 'em, though I never bring down another deer, or spear another salmon. What have I done, that you should wish to see *me* in such a flaunting coat, Judith!"

"Because I think, Deerslayer, that the false-tongued and false-hearted young gallants of the garrison, ought not alone to appear in fine feathers; but that truth and honesty have *their* claims to be honoured and exalted."

"And what exaltification—" The reader will have remarked that Deerslayer had not very critically studied his dictionary—"And what exaltification would it be to me, Judith, to be bedizzened and bescarleted, like a Mingo chief that has just got his presents up from Quebec? No—no—I'm well as I am; and if not, I can be no better. Lay the coat down on the blanket, Sarpent, and let us look further into the chist."

The tempting garment, one surely that was never intended for Hutter, was laid aside, and the examination proceeded. The male attire, all of which corresponded with the coat in quality, was soon exhausted, and then succeeded female. A beautiful dress of brocade, a little the worse from negligent treatment, followed; and this time open exclamations of delight escaped the lips of Judith. Much as the girl had been addicted to dress, and favourable as had been her opportunities of seeing some little pretension in that way, among the

wives of the different commandants, and other ladies of the forts, never before had she beheld a tissue, or tints to equal those that were now so unexpectedly placed before her eyes. Her rapture was almost childish; nor would she allow the inquiry to proceed until she had attired her person in a robe so unsuited to her habits and her abode. With this end, she withdrew into her own room, where, with hands practised in such offices, she soon got rid of her own neat gown of linen, and stood forth in the gay tints of the brocade. The dress happened to fit the fine, full, person of Judith, and certainly it had never adorned a being better qualified by natural gifts, to do credit to its really rich hues and fine texture. When she returned, both Deerslayer and Chingachgook, who had passed the brief time of her absence, in taking a second look at the male garments, arose in surprise, each permitting exclamations of wonder and pleasure to escape him, in a way so unequivocal as to add new lustre to the eyes of Judith, by flushing her cheeks with a glow of triumph. Affecting, however, not to notice the impression she had made, the girl seated herself with the stateliness of a queen, desiring that the chest might be looked into further.

"I don't know a better way to treat with the Mingos, gal," cried Deerslayer, "than to send you ashore, as you be, and to tell 'em that a queen has arrived among 'em! They 'll give up old Hutter, and Hurry, and Hetty, too, at such a spectacle!"

"I thought your tongue too honest to flatter, Deerslayer," returned the girl, gratified at this admiration more than she would have cared to own. "One of the chief reasons of my respect for you, was your love for truth."

"And 'tis truth, and solemn truth, Judith, and nothing else. Never did eyes of mine gaze on as glorious a lookin' creatur', as you be yourself at this very moment! I've seen beauties in my time, too, both white and red; and them that was renowned and talk'd of, far and near; but never have I beheld one that could hold any comparison with what you are at this blessed instant, Judith; never."

The glance of delight which the girl bestowed on the frank-speaking hunter, in no degree lessened the effect of her charms; and as the humid eyes blended with it a look of sensibility, perhaps Judith never appeared more truly lovely, than at what the young man had called that "blessed instant." He shook his head, held it suspended a moment over the open

chest like one in doubt, and then proceeded with the examination.

Several of the minor articles of female dress came next, all of a quality to correspond with the gown. These were laid at Judith's feet, in silence, as if she had a natural claim to their possession. One or two, such as gloves, and lace, the girl caught up, and appended to her already rich attire, in affected playfulness, but with the real design of decorating her person as far as circumstances would allow. When these two remarkable suits, male and female they might be termed, were removed, another canvass covering separated the remainder of the articles from the part of the chest which they had occupied. As soon as Deerslayer perceived this arrangement, he paused, doubtful of the propriety of proceeding any further.

"Every man has his secrets, I suppose," he said, "and all men have a right to their enj'yment; we've got low enough in this chist, in my judgment to answer our wants, and it seems to me we should do well by going no farther; and by letting Master Hutter have to himself, and his own feelin's, all that's beneath this cover."

"Do you mean, Deerslayer, to offer these clothes to the Iroquois, as ransom?" demanded Judith, quickly.

"Sartain. What are we prying into another man's chist for, but to sarve its owner in the best way we can. This coat, alone, would be very apt to gain over the head-chief of the riptyles; and if his wife or darter should happen to be out with him, that there gownd would soften the heart of any woman that is to be found atween Albany and Montreal. I do not see that we want a larger stock in trade than these two articles."

"To you it may seem so, Deerslayer," returned the disappointed girl; "but of what use could a dress like this be to an Indian woman? She could not wear it among the branches of the trees; the dirt and smoke of the wigwam would soon soil it; and how would a pair of red arms appear, thrust through these short, laced sleeves!"

"All very true, gal; and you might go on and say, it is altogether out of time, and place, and season, in this region at all. What is it to us how the finery is treated, so long as it answers our wishes? I do not see that your father can make any use of such clothes; and

it 's lucky he has things that are of no valie to himself, that will bear a high price with others. We can make no better trade for him, than to offer these duds for his liberty. We'll throw in the light frivol'ties, and get Hurry off in the bargain!"

"Then you think, Deerslayer, that Thomas Hutter has no one in his family—no child—no daughter, to whom this dress may be thought becoming, and whom you could wish to see in it, once and awhile, even though it should be at long intervals, and only in playfulness?"

"I understand you, Judith—yes, I now understand your meaning; and I think I can say, your wishes. That you are as glorious, in that dress, as the sun when it rises, or sets, in a soft October day, I'm ready to allow; and that you greatly become it, is a good deal more sartain than that it becomes you. There's gifts in clothes, as well as in other things. Now I do not think that a warrior on his first path, ought to lay on the same awful paints as a chief that has had his virtue tried, and knows from exper'ence he will not disgrace his pretensions. So it is with all of us, red or white. You are Thomas Hutter's darter, and that gownd was made for the child of some gover-

nor, or a lady of high station; and it was intended to be worn among fine furniture, and in rich company. In my eyes, Judith, a modest maiden never looks more becoming, than when becomingly clad, and nothing is suitable that is out of character. Besides, gal, if there's a creatur' in the colony that can afford to do without finery and trust to her own good looks, and sweet countenance, it's yourself."

"I'll take off the rubbish this instant, Deerslayer," cried the girl, springing up to leave the room; "and never do I wish to see it on any human being again."

"So it is with 'em all, Sarpent," said the other, turning to his friend and laughing, as soon as the beauty had disappeared. "They like finery, but they like their natyve charms most of all. I'm glad the gal has consented to lay aside her furbelows, howsever, for it's ag'in reason for one of her class to wear 'em; and then she *is* handsome enough, as I call it, to go alone. Hist would show oncommon likely, too, in such a gownd, Delaware!"

"Wah-ta!-Wah is a red-skin girl, Deerslayer," returned the Indian; "like the young of the pigeon, she is to be known by her own feathers. I should pass by without knowing

her, were she dressed in such a skin. It's wisest always to be so clad that our friends need not ask us for our names. The 'Wild Rose' is very pleasant, but she is no sweeter for so many colours."

"That's it!—that's natur', and the true foundation for love and protection. When a man stops to pick a wild strawberry, he does not expect to find a melon, and when he wishes to gather a melon, he's disapp'inted if it prove to be a squash, though squashes *be* often brighter to the eye than melons. That's it, and it means, stick to your gifts, and your gifts will stick to you."

The two men had now a little discussion together, touching the propriety of penetrating any farther into the chest of Hutter, when Judith re-appeared, divested of her robes, and in her own simple linen frock again.

"Thank you, Judith," said Deerslayer, taking her kindly by the hand; "for I know it went a little ag'in the nat'ral cravings of woman to lay aside so much finery, as it might be, in a lump. But you're more pleasing to the eye as you stand, you be, than if you had a crown on your head, and jewels dangling from your hair. The question now is, whether

'to lift this covering, to see what will be ra'ally the best bargain we can make for Master Hutter; for we must do as we think *he* would be willing to do, did he stand here in our places."

Judith looked very happy. Accustomed as she was to adulation, the humble homage of Deerslayer had given her more true satisfaction than she had ever yet received from the tongue of man. It was not the terms in which this admiration had been expressed, for *they* were simple enough, that produced so strong an impression; nor yet their novelty, or their warmth of manner, nor any of those peculiarities that usually give value to praise, but the unflinching truth of the speaker, that carried his words so directly to the heart of the listener. This is one of the great advantages of plain dealing and frankness. The habitual and wily flatterer may succeed until his practices recoil on himself, and like other sweets, his aliment cloys by its excess; but he who deals honestly, though he often necessarily offend, possesses a power of praising that no quality but sincerity can bestow; since his words go directly to the heart, finding their support in the understanding. Thus it was with Deerslayer and Judith; so soon and so

deeply did this simple hunter impress all who knew him with a conviction of his unbending honesty, that all he uttered in commendation was as certain to please, as all he uttered in the way of rebuke was certain to rankle and excite enmity, where his character had not awakened a respect and affection, that in another sense rendered it painful. In after life, when the career of this untutored being brought him in contact with officers of rank, and others entrusted with the care of the interests of the state, this same influence was exerted on a wider field; even generals listening to his commendations with a glow of pleasure, that it was not always in the power of their official superiors to awaken. Perhaps Judith was the first individual of his own colour who fairly submitted to this natural consequence of truth and fair-dealing on the part of Deerslayer. She had actually pined for his praise, and she had now received it; and that in the form which was most agreeable to her weaknesses and habits of thought. The result will appear in the course of the narrative.

"If we knew all that chest holds, Deerslayer," returned the girl, when she had a little recovered from the immediate effect produced

by his commendations of her personal appearance, "we could better determine on the course we ought to take."

"That's not onreasonable, gal, though it's more a pale-face than a red-skin gift, to be prying into other people's secrets."

"Curiosity is natural, and it is expected that all human beings should have human failings. Whenever I've been at the garrisons, I've found that most, in and about them, had a longing to learn their neighbour's secrets."

"Yes, and sometimes to fancy them, when they couldn't find 'em out. That's the difference atween an Indian gentleman and a white gentleman. The Sarpent, here, would turn his head aside if he found himself onknowingly lookin' into another chief's wigwam; whereas, in the settlements, while all pretend to be great people, most prove they've got betters by the manner in which they talk of their consarns. I'll be bound, Judith, you wouldn't get the Sarpent, there, to confess there was another in the tribe so much greater than himself as to become the subject of his idees, and to empl'y his tongue in conversations about his movements, and ways, and food, and all the other little matters that occupy a man when he 's not

empl'y'd in his greater duties. He who does this, is but little better than a blackguard in the grain, and them that encourages him, is pretty much of the same kidney, let them wear coats as fine as they may, or of what dye they please."

"But this is not another man's wigwam; it belongs to my father; these are his things, and they are wanted in his service."

"That's true, gal; that's true; and it carries weight with it. Well, when all is before us, we may indeed best judge which to offer for the ransom, and which to withhold."

Judith was not altogether as disinterested in her feelings, as she affected to be. She remembered that the curiosity of Hetty had been indulged, in connection with this chest, while her own had been disregarded; and she was not sorry to possess an opportunity of being placed on a level with her less gifted sister in this one particular. It appearing to be admitted all round, that the inquiry into the contents of the chest ought to be pushed further, Deerslayer proceeded to remove the second covering of canvass.

The articles that lay uppermost when the curtain was again raised on the secrets of the

chest, were a pair of pistols, curiously inlaid with silver. Their value would have been considerable in one of the towns, though as weapons in the woods, they were a species of arms seldom employed; never, indeed, unless it might be by some officer from Europe who visited the colonies, as many were then wont to do, so much impressed with the superiority of the usages of London, as to fancy they were not to be laid aside on the frontier of America. What occurred on the discovery of these weapons will appear in the succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER III.

"An oaken, broken, elbow chair;
A candle-cup without an ear;
A battered, shattered, ash bedstead;
A box of deal without a lid;
A pair of tongs, but out of joint;
A back-sword poker, without point;
A dish which might good meat afford once;
An Ovid, and an old Concordance."

DEAN SWIFT'S *Inventory*.

No sooner did Deerslayer raise the pistols, than he turned to the Delaware and held them up for his admiration.

"Child gun," said the Serpent, smiling, while he handled one of the instruments as if it had been a toy.

"Not 'it, Sarpent; not it. 'Tis made for a man, and would satisfy a giant if rightly used. But stop; white men are remarkable for their carelessness in putting away fire-arms in chists and corners. Let me look if care has been given to these we'pons."

As Deerslayer spoke, he took the weapon

from the hand of his friend, and opened the pan. The last was filled with priming, caked like a bit of cinder, by time, moisture and compression. An application of the ramrod showed that both the pistols were charged, although Judith could testify that they had probably lain for years in the chest. It is not easy to portray the surprise of the Indian at this discovery, for he was in the practice of renewing his priming daily, and of looking to the contents of his piece at other short intervals.

"This is white neglect," said Deerslayer, shaking his head, "and scarce a season goes by, that some one in the settlements doesn't suffer from it. It's extr'onary too, Judith—yes, it's downright extr'ornary, that the owner shall fire his piece at a deer, or some other game, or perhaps at an inimy, and twice out of three times he'll miss; but let him catch an accident with one of these forgotten charges, and he makes it sartain death to a child, or a brother, or a fri'nd! Well, we shall do a good turn to the owner if we fire these pistols for him; and as they're novelties to you and me, Sarpent, we'll try our hands at a mark. Freshen that priming, and I'll do the same with this,

and then we'll see who is the best man with a pistol; as for the rifle, that's long been settled atween us."

Deerslayer laughed heartily at his own conceit, and in a minute or two they were both standing on the platform, selecting some object in the ark for their target. Judith was led by curiosity to their side.

"Stand back, gal, stand a little back; these we'pons have been long loaded," said Deerslayer, "and some accident may happen in the discharge."

"Then *you* shall not fire them! Give them both to the Delaware; or it would be better to unload them without firing."

"That's ag'in usage—and some people say ag'in manhood; though I hold to no such silly doctrine. We must fire 'em, Judith; yes, we must fire 'em; though I foresee that neither will have any great reason to boast of his skill."

Judith, in the main, was a girl of great personal spirit, and her habits prevented her from feeling any of the terror that is apt to come over her sex at the report of fire-arms. She had discharged many a rifle, and had even been known to kill a deer under circumstances that were favourable to the effort. She submitted,

therefore, falling a little back by the side of Deerslayer, giving the Indian the front of the platform to himself. Chingachgook raised the weapon several times, endeavoured to steady it by using both hands, changed his attitude from one that was awkward to another still more so, and finally drew the trigger with a sort of desperate indifference, without having, in reality, secured any aim at all. The consequence was, that instead of hitting the knot, which had been selected for the mark, he missed the ark altogether; the bullet skipping along the water like a stone that was thrown by hand.

"Well done, Sarpent—well done," cried Deerslayer, laughing with his noiseless glee; "you've hit the lake, and that's an expl'ite for some men! I know'd it, and as much as said it here, to Judith; for your short we'pons don't belong to red-skin gifts. You've hit the lake, and that's better than only hitting the air! Now, stand back, and let us see what white gifts can do with a white we'pon. A pistol isn't a rifle; but colour is colour."

The aim of Deerslayer was both quick and steady, and the report followed almost as soon as the weapon rose. Still the pistol hung fire, as it is termed, and fragments of it flew in a

dozen directions, some falling on the roof of the castle, others in the ark, and one in the water. Judith screamed, and when the two men turned anxiously towards the girl, she was as pale as death, trembling in every limb.

"She's wounded—yes, the poor gal's wounded, Sarpent, though one couldn't foresee it, standing where she did. We'll lead her into a seat, and we must do the best for her that our knowledge and skill can afford."

Judith suffered herself to be supported to a seat, swallowed a mouthful of the water that the Delaware offered her in a gourd, and after a violent fit of trembling that seemed ready to shake her fine frame to dissolution, she burst into tears.

"The pain must be borne, poor Judith—yes, it must be borne," said Deerslayer, soothingly; "though I am far from wishing you not to weep; for weeping often lightens galish feelin's. Where can she be hurt, Sarpent? I see no signs of blood, nor any rent of skin or garments."

"I am uninjured, Deerslayer," stammered the girl through her tears. "It's fright—nothing more, I do assure you; and God be

praised! no one, I find, has been harmed by the accident."

"This is extr'ornary!" exclaimed the unsuspecting and simple-minded hunter. "I thought, Judith, you'd been above settlement weaknesses, and that you was a gal not to be frightened by the sound of a bursting we'pon. No—I didn't think you so skeary! *Hetty* might well have been startled; but you've too much judgment and reason to be frightened when the danger's all over. They're pleasant to the eye, chief, and changeful, but very unsartain in their feelin's!"

Shame kept Judith silent. There had been no acting in her agitation, but all had fairly proceeded from sudden and uncontrollable alarm—an alarm that she found almost as inexplicable to herself, as it proved to be to her companions. Wiping away the traces of tears, however, she smiled again, and was soon able to join in the laugh at her own folly.

"And you, Deerslayer," she at length succeeded in saying, "are you, indeed, altogether unhurt? It seems almost miraculous that a pistol should have burst in your hand, and you escape without the loss of a limb, if not of life!"

"Such wonders ar'n't oncommon at all among worn-out arms. The first rifle they gave me play'd the same trick, and yet I lived through it, though not as onharmless as I've got out of this affair. Thomas Hutter is master of one pistol less than he was this morning; but as it happened in trying to sarve him, there's no ground of complaint. Now draw near, and let us look further into the inside of the chist."

Judith, by this time, had so far gotten the better of her agitation as to resume her seat, and the examination went on. The next article that offered was enveloped in cloth, and on opening it, it proved to be one of the mathematical instruments that were then in use among seamen, possessing the usual ornaments and fastenings in brass. Deerslayer and Chingachgook expressed their admiration and surprise at the unknown instrument, which was bright and glittering, having apparently been well cared for.

"This goes beyond the surveyors, Judith," Deerslayer exclaimed, after turning the instrument several times in his hands; I've seen all their tools often, and wicked and heartless enough are they, for they never come into the

forest but to lead the way to waste and destruction; but none of them have as designing a look as this! I fear me, after all, that Thomas Hutter has journeyed into the wilderness with no fair intentions towards its happiness. Did you ever see any of the cravings of a surveyor about your father, gal?"

"He is no surveyor, Deerslayer, nor does he know the use of that instrument, though he seems to own it. Do you suppose that Thomas Hutter ever wore that coat?' It is as much too large for him as this instrument is beyond his learning."

"That's it—that must be it, Sarpent; and the old fellow, by some unknown means, has fallen heir to another man's goods! They say he has been a mariner, and, no doubt, this chist, and all it holds—Ha! what have we here? This far out-does the brass and black wood of the tool!"

Deerslayer had opened a small bag, from which he was taking, one by one, the pieces of a set of chessmen. They were of ivory, much larger than common, and exquisitely wrought. Each piece represented the character or thing after which it is named; the knights being mounted, the castles stood on elephants, and

even the pawns possessed the heads and busts of men. The set was not complete, and a few fractures betrayed bad usage; but all that was left had been carefully put away and preserved. Even Judith expressed wonder, as these novel objects were placed before her eyes, and Chingachgook fairly forgot his Indian dignity in admiration and delight. The latter took up each piece, and examined it with never-tiring satisfaction, pointing out to the girl the more ingenious and striking portions of the workmanship. But the elephants gave him the greatest pleasure. The "Hughs!" that he uttered as he passed his fingers over their trunks, and ears, and tails, were very distinct; nor did he fail to note the pawns, which were armed as archers. This exhibition lasted several minutes, during which time Judith and the Indian had all the rapture to themselves. Deerslayer sat silent, thoughtful, and even gloomy, though his eyes followed each movement of the two principal actors, noting every new peculiarity about the pieces as they were held up to view. Not an exclamation of pleasure, nor a word of commendation passed his lips. At length his companions observed his silence, and then, for the first time since

the chessmen had been discovered, did he speak.

"Judith," he asked earnestly, but with a concern that amounted almost to tenderness of manner, "did your parents ever talk to you of religion?"

The girl coloured, and the flashes of crimson that passed over her beautiful countenance were like the wayward tints of a Neapolitan sky in November. Deerslayer had given her so strong a taste for truth, however, that she did not waver in her answer, replying simply and with sincerity,

"My *mother* did, often," she said; "my father *never*. I thought it made my mother sorrowful to speak of our prayers and duties, but my father has never opened his mouth on such matters before or since her death."

"That I can believe—that I can believe. He has no God—no such God as it becomes a man of white skin to worship, or even a red-skin. Them things are idols!"

Judith started, and for a moment she seemed seriously hurt. Then she reflected and, in the end she laughed.

"And you think, Deerslayer, that these ivory

toys are my father's gods? I have heard of idols, and know what they are."

"Them are idols!" repeated the other positively. "Why should your father keep 'em if he doesn't worship 'em?"

"Would he keep his gods in a bag, and locked up in a chest? No, no, Deerslayer; my poor father carries his god with him wherever he goes, and that is in his own cravings. These things may really be idols—I think they are, myself, from what I have heard and read of idolatry, but they have come from some distant country, like all the other articles, and have fallen into Thomas Hutter's hands when he has been a sailor."

"I'm glad of it—I am downright glad to hear it, Judith, for I do not think I could have mustered the resolution to strive to help a white idolator out of his difficulties! The old man is of my colour and nation, and I wish to sarve him; but as one who denied all his gifts, in the way of religion, it would have come hard to do so. That animal seems to give you great satisfaction, Sarpent, though it's an idolatrous head at the best."

"It is an elephant," interrupted Judith. "I've often seen pictures of such animals at

the garrisons; and mother had a book in which there was a printed account of the creature. Father burnt that, with all the other books, for he said mother loved reading too well. This was not long before mother died, and I've sometimes thought that the loss hastened her end."

This was said equally without levity and without any deep feeling. It was said without levity, for Judith was saddened by her recollections, and yet she had been too much accustomed to live for self, and for the indulgence of her own vanities, to feel her mother's wrongs very heavily: It required extraordinary circumstances to awaken a proper sense of her situation, and to stimulate the better feelings of this beautiful, but misguided girl; and these circumstances had not yet occurred in her brief existence.

"Elephant, or no elephant, 'tis an idol," returned the hunter, "and not fit to remain in Christian keeping."

"Good for Iroquois!" said Chingachgook, parting with one of the castles with reluctance, as his friend took it from him to replace it in the bag. "Elephon buy whole tribe—buy Delaware almost!"

"Ay, that it would, as any one who comprehends red-skin natur' must know," answered Deerslayer; "but the man that passes false money, Sarpent, is as bad as he who makes it. Did you ever know a just Indian that wouldn't scorn to sell a coon-skin for the true marten, or to pass off a mink for a beaver. I know that a few of these idols, perhaps *one* of them elephants, would go far towards buying Thomas Hutter's liberty, but it goes ag'in conscience to pass such counterfeit money. Perhaps no Indian tribe, hereaway, is down right idolaters, but there's some that come so near it, that white gifts ought to be particular about encouraging them in their mistake."

"If idolatry is a *gift*, Deerslayer, and *gifts* are what you seem to think them, idolatry in such people can hardly be a sin," said Judith, with more smartness than discrimination.

"God grants no such gifts to any of his creatur's, Judith," returned the hunter seriously. "*He* must be adored under some name or other, and not creatur's of brass or ivory. It matters not whether the Father of all is called God, or Manitou, Deity or Great Spirit, he is none the less our common Maker and Master; nor does it count for much whether the souls of the just

go to Paradise or happy hunting-grounds, since He may send each his own way, as suits his own pleasure and wisdom; but it curdles my blood when I find human mortals so bound up in darkness and consait as to fashion the 'arth, or wood, or bones—things made by their own hands—into motionless, senseless effigies, and then fall down before them and worship 'em as a Deity!"

"After all, Deerslayer, these pieces of ivory may not be idols at all. I remember, now, to have seen one of the officers at the garrison with a set of fox and geese made in some such a design as these; and here is something hard, wrapped in cloth, that may belong to your idols."

Deerslayer took the bundle the girl gave him, and unrolling it, he found the board within. Like the pieces, it was large, rich, and inlaid with ebony and ivory. Putting the whole in conjunction, the hunter, though not without many misgivings, slowly came over to Judith's opinion, and finally admitted that the fancied idols must be merely the curiously carved men of some unknown game. Judith had the tact to use her victory with great moderation; nor did she once, even in the most

indirect manner, allude to the ludicrous mistake of her companion.

This discovery of the uses of the extraordinary-looking little images, settled the affair of the proposed ransom. It was agreed generally —and all understood the weaknesses and tastes of Indians—that nothing could be more likely to tempt the cupidity of the Iroquois than the elephants in particular. Luckily the whole of the castles were among the pieces, and these four tower-bearing animals it was finally determined should be the ransom offered. The remainder of the men, and, indeed, all the rest of the articles in the chest, were to be kept out of view, and to be resorted to only as a last appeal. As soon as these preliminaries were settled, every thing but those intended for the bribe was carefully replaced in the chest, and all the covers were 'tucked in,' as they had been found; and it was quite possible, could Hutter have been put in possession of the castle again, that he might have passed the remainder of his days in it, without even suspecting the invasion that had been made on the privacy of the chest. The rent pistol would have been the most likely to reveal the secret; but this was placed by the side of its fellow,

and all were pressed down as before—some half-a-dozen packages in the bottom of the chest not having been opened at all. When this was done, the lid was lowered, the padlocks replaced, and the key turned. The latter was then replaced in the pocket from which it had been taken.

More than an hour was consumed in settling the course proper to be pursued, and in returning every thing to its place. The pauses to converse were frequent; and Judith, who experienced a lively pleasure in the open, undisguised admiration with which Deerslayer's honest eye gazed at her handsome face, found the means to prolong the interview with a dexterity that seems to be innate in female coquetry. Deerslayer, indeed, appeared to be the first who was conscious of the time that had been thus wasted, and to call the attention of his companions to the necessity of doing something towards putting the plan of ransoming into execution. Chingachgook had remained in Hutter's bed-room, where the elephants were laid, to feast his eyes with the images of animals so wonderful and so novel. Perhaps an instinct told him that his presence would not be as acceptable to his companions,

as this holding himself aloof; for Judith had not much reserve in the manifestations of her preferences, and the Delaware had not got so far as one betrothed without acquiring some knowledge of the symptoms of the master passion.

"Well, Judith," said Deerslayer, rising, after the interview had lasted much longer than even he himself suspected, "'tis pleasant conversing with you, and settling all these matters, but duty calls us another way. All this time Hurry and your father, not to say Hetty—"

The word was cut short in the speaker's mouth, for, at that critical moment, a light step was heard on the platform or court-yard, a human figure darkened the door-way, and the person last mentioned stood before him. The low exclamation that escaped Deerslayer and the slight scream of Judith were hardly uttered, when an Indian youth, between the ages of fifteen and seventeen, stood beside her. These two entrances had been made with moccasined feet, and consequently almost without noise; but, unexpected and stealthy as they were, they had not the effect to disturb Deerslayer's self-possession. His first measure was to speak rapidly in Delaware to his friend, cautioning

him to keep out of sight while he stood on his guard; the second was to step to the door to ascertain the extent of the danger. No one else, however, had come; and a simple contrivance, in the shape of a raft, that lay floating at the side of the ark, at once explained the means that had been used in bringing Hetty off. Two dead and dry, and consequently buoyant, logs of pine were bound together with pins and withes, and a little platform of river chestnut had been rudely placed on their surfaces. Here Hetty had been seated on a billet of wood, while the young Iroquois had rowed the primitive and slow-moving, but perfectly safe craft from the shore. As soon as Deerslayer had taken a close survey of this raft, and satisfied himself nothing else was near, he shook his head, and muttered in his soliloquizing way—

"This comes of prying into another man's chist! Had we been watchful and keen-eyed, such a surprise could never have happened; and getting this much from a boy, teaches us what we may expect when the old warriors set themselves fairly about their sarcumventions. It opens the way, howsever, to a treaty for the ransom, and I will hear what Hetty has to say."

Judith, as soon as her surprise and alarm had a little abated, discovered a proper share of affectionate joy at the return of her sister. She folded her to her bosom, and kissed her, as had been her wont in the days of their childhood and innocence. Hetty herself was less affected, for to her there was no surprise, and her nerves were sustained by the purity and holiness of her purpose. At her sister's request she took a seat, and entered into an account of her adventures since they had parted. Her tale commenced just as Deerslayer returned, and he also became an attentive listener, while the young Iroquois stood near the door, seemingly as indifferent to what was passing, as one of its posts.

The narrative of the girl was sufficiently clear, until she reached the time where we left her in the camp, after the interview with the chiefs, and at the moment when Hist quitted her in the abrupt manner already stated. The sequel of the story may be told in her own language.

"When I read the texts to the chiefs, Judith, you could not have seen that they made any changes on their minds," she said; "but if seed is planted, it *will* grow. God planted the seeds of all the trees—"

"Ay, that did he—that did he," muttered Deerslayer; "and a goodly harvest has followed."

"God planted the seeds of all the trees," continued Hetty, after a moment's pause, "and you see to what a height and shade they have grown! So it is with the Bible. You may read a verse this year, and forget it, and it will come back to you a year hence, when you least expect to remember it."

"And did you find any thing of this, among the savages, poor Hetty?"

"Yes, Judith, and sooner, and more fully than I had even hoped. I did not stay long with father and Hurry, but went to get my breakfast with Hist. As soon as we had done, the chiefs came to us, and *then* we found the fruits of the seed that had been planted. They said what I had read from the good book was right—it *must* be right—it sounded *right*; like a sweet bird singing in their ears; and they told me to come back and say as much to the great warrior who had slain one of their braves; and to tell it to you, and to say how happy they should be to come to church here in the castle, or to come out in the sun, and hear me read more of the sacred volume—and to tell you that they wish you would lend them some canoes,

that they can bring father and Hurry, and their women to the castle, that we might all sit on the platform there, and listen to the singing of the pale-face Manitou. There, Judith, did you ever know of any thing that so plainly shows the power of the Bible as *that*!"

"If it were true 'twould be a miracle, indeed, Hetty. But all this is no more than Indian cunning and Indian treachery, striving to get the better of us by management, when they find it is not to be done by force."

"Do you doubt the Bible, sister, that you judge the savages so harshly!"

"I do not doubt the Bible, poor Hetty, but I much doubt an Indian and an Iroquois. What do you say to this visit, Deerslayer?"

"First let me talk a little with Hetty," returned the party appealed to; "was this raft made after you had got your breakfast, gal; and did you walk from the camp to the shore opposite to us, here?"

"Oh! no, Deerslayer. The raft was ready made, and in the water—could that have been by a miracle, Judith?"

"Yes—yes—an Indian miracle," rejoined the hunter. "They're expart enough in them sort of miracles. And you found the raft

ready made to your hands, and in the water, and in waiting like for its cargo?"

"It was all as you say. The raft was near the camp, and the Indians put me on it, and had ropes of bark, and they dragged me to the place opposite to the castle, and then they told that young man to row me off here."

"And the woods are full of the vagabonds, waiting to know what is to be the upshot of the miracle. We comprehend this affair now, Judith, and I'll first get rid of this young Canadian blood-sucker, and then we'll settle our own course. Do you and Hetty leave us together, first bringing me the elephants, which the Sarpent is admiring; for 't will never do to let this loping deer be alone a minute, or he'll borrow a canoe without asking."

Judith did as desired, first bringing the pieces, and retiring with her sister into their own room. Deerslayer had acquired some knowledge of most of the Indian dialects of that region, and he knew enough of the Iroquois to hold a dialogue in the language. Beckoning to the lad, therefore, he caused him to take a seat on the chest, when he placed two of the castles suddenly before him. Up to that moment, this youthful savage had not

expressed a single intelligible emotion or fancy. There were many things, in and about the place, that were novelties to him, but he had maintained his self-command with philosophical composure. It is true, Deerslayer had detected his dark eye scanning the defences and the arms, but the scrutiny had been made with such an air of innocence, in such a gaping, indolent, boyish manner, that no one but a man who had himself been taught in a similar school, would have even suspected his object. The instant, however, the eyes of the savage fell upon the wrought ivory, and the images of the wonderful unknown beasts, surprise and admiration got the mastery of him. The manner in which the natives of the South Sea Islands first beheld the toys of civilized life, has been often described; but the reader is not to confound it with the manner of an American Indian, under similar circumstances. In this particular case, the young Iroquois, or Huron, permitted an exclamation of rapture to escape him, and then he checked himself, like one who had been guilty of an indecorum. After this, his eyes ceased to wander, but became riveted on the elephants, one of which, after a short hesitation, he even presumed to handle.

Deerslayer did not interrupt him for quite ten minutes, knowing that the lad was taking such note of the curiosities as would enable him to give the most minute and accurate description of their appearance to his seniors, on his return. When he thought sufficient time had been allowed to produce the desired effect, the hunter laid a finger on the naked knee of the youth, and drew his attention to himself.

"Listen," he said; "I want to talk with my young friend from the Canadas. Let him forget that wonder for a minute."

"Where t'other pale brother?" demanded the boy, looking up, and letting the idea that had been most prominent in his mind, previously to the introduction of the chessmen, escape him involuntarily.

"He sleeps—or if he isn't fairly asleep, he is in the room where the men do sleep," returned Deerslayer. "How did my young friend know there was another?"

"See him from the shore. Iroquois have got long eyes—see beyond the clouds—see the bottom of the great spring!"

"Well, the Iroquois are welcome. Two pale-faces are prisoners in the camp of your fathers, boy."

The lad nodded, treating the circumstance with great apparent indifference; though a moment after, he laughed as if exulting in the superior address of his own tribe.

"Can you tell me, boy, what your chiefs intend to do with these captyves; or haven't they yet made up their minds?"

The lad looked a moment at the hunter, with a little surprise, then he coolly put the end of his fore finger on his own head, just above the left ear, and passed it round his crown, with an accuracy and readiness that showed how well he had been drilled in the peculiar art of his race.

"When," demanded Deerslayer, whose gorge rose at this cool demonstration of indifference to human life. "And why not take them to your wigwams?"

"Road too long, and full of pale-faces. Wigwam full, and scalps sell high. Small scalp, much gold."

"Well, that explains it—yes, that does explain it. There's no need of being any plainer. Now you know, lad, that the oldest of your prisoners is the father of these two young women, and the other is the suitor of one of them. The gals nat'rally wish to save the

scalps of such fri'nds, and they will give them two ivory creatur's as ransom, one for each scalp. Go back and tell this to your chiefs, and bring me the answer before the sun sets."

The boy entered zealously into this project, and with a sincerity that left no doubt of his executing his commission with intelligence and promptitude. For a moment, he forgot his love of honour, and all his clannish hostility to the British and their Indians, in his wish to have such a treasure in his tribe, and Deerslayer was satisfied with the impression he had made. It is true, the lad proposed to carry one of the elephants with him as a specimen of the other, but to this his brother negotiator was too sagacious to consent, well knowing that it might never reach its destination if confided to such hands. This little difficulty was soon arranged, and then the boy prepared to depart. As he stood on the platform, ready to step aboard of the raft, he hesitated and turned short, with a proposal to borrow a canoe, as the means most likely to shorten the negotiation. Deerslayer quietly refused the request, and after lingering a little longer, the boy rowed slowly away from the castle, taking the

direction of a thicket on the shore, that lay less than half a mile distant. Deerslayer seated himself on a stool and watched the progress of the ambassador; sometimes closely scanning the whole line of shore, as far as eye could reach, and then placing an elbow on a knee, he remained a long time with his chin resting on the hand.

During the interview between Deerslayer and the lad, a different scene took place in the adjoining room. Hetty had inquired for the Delaware, and being told why and where he remained concealed, she joined him. The reception which Chingachgook gave his visitor, was respectful and gentle. He understood her character, and no doubt, his disposition to be kind to such a being was increased by the hope of learning some tidings of his betrothed. As soon as the girl entered, she took a seat, and invited the Indian to place himself near her, and then she continued silent, as if she thought it decorous for him to question her, before she consented to speak on the subject she had on her mind. But as Chingachgook did not understand this feeling, he remained respectfully attentive to any thing she might be pleased to tell him.

"You are Chingachgook—the Great Serpent of the Delawares, ar'n't you?" the girl at length commenced, in her own simple way, losing her self-command in the desire to proceed, but anxious first to make sure of the individual.

"Chingachgook," returned the Delaware, with grave dignity. "That say Great Sarpent in Deerslayer tongue."

"Well, that is my tongue. Deerslayer, and father, and Judith, and I, and poor Hurry Harry—do you know Henry March, Great Serpent? I know you don't, however, or *he* would have spoken of *you*, too."

"Did any tongue name Chingachgook, Drooping-Lily?" for so the chief had named poor Hetty. "Was his name sung by a little bird among the Iroquois?"

Hetty did not answer at first; but with that indescribable feeling that awakens sympathy and intelligence among the youthful and unpractised of her sex, she hung her head, and the blood suffused her cheek ere she found her tongue. It would have exceeded her stock of intelligence to explain this embarrassment; but though poor Hetty could not reason on every emergency, she could always feel. The colour slowly receded from her cheek, and the

girl looked up archly at the Indian, smiling with the innocence of a child, mingled with the interest of a woman.

"My sister, the Drooping-Lily, hear such bird!" Chingachgook added, and this with a gentleness of tone and manner, that would have astonished those who sometimes heard the discordant cries that often came from the same throat; these transitions from the harsh and guttural, to the soft and melodious, not being unfrequent in ordinary Indian dialogues. "My sister's ears were open—has she lost her tongue?"

"You *are* Chingachgook—you *must* be; for there is no other red man here, and she thought Chingachgook would come."

"Chin-gach-gook," pronouncing the name slowly, and dwelling on each syllable; "Great Sarpent, Yengeese tongue."

"Chin-gach-gook," repeated Hetty, in the same deliberate manner. "Yes, so Hist called it, and you *must* be the chief."

"Wah-ta!-Wah," added the Delaware.

"Wah-ta!-Wah, or Hist-oh!-Hist. I think Hist prettier than Wah, and so I call her Hist."

"Wah! very sweet in Delaware ears!"

"You make it sound differently from me. But, never mind; I *did* hear the bird you speak of sing, Great Serpent."

"Will my sister say words of song? What she sing most—how she look—often she laugh?"

"She sang Chin-gach-gook oftener than any thing else; and she laughed heartily, when I told how the Iroquois waded into the water after us, and could'nt catch us. I hope these logs haven't ears, Serpent!"

"No fear logs; fear sister next room. No fear Iroquois; Deerslayer stuff his eyes and ears with strange beast."

"I understand you, Serpent, and I understood Hist. Sometimes I think I'm not half as feeble-minded as they say I am. Now, do you look up at the roof, and I'll tell you all. But you frighten me, you look so eager, when I speak of Hist."

The Indian controlled his looks, and affected to comply with the simple request of the girl.

"Hist told me to say, in a very low voice, that you mustn't trust the Iroquois in any thing. They are more artful than any Indians she knows. Then she says that there is a

large bright star, that comes over the hill, about an hour after dark,—(Hist had pointed out the planet Venus, without knowing it)—and just as that star comes in sight, she will be on the point where I landed last night, and that you must come for her in a canoe.

"Good — Chingachgook understand well enough, now; but he understand better, if my sister sing to him ag'in."

Hetty repeated her words, more fully explaining what star was meant, and mentioning the part of the point where he was to venture ashore. She now proceeded in her own unsophisticated way to relate her intercourse with the Indian maid, and to repeat several of her expressions and opinions, that gave great delight to the heart of her betrothed. She particularly renewed her injunctions to be on their guard against treachery; a warning that was scarcely needed, however, as addressed to men as wary as those to whom it was sent. She also explained, with sufficient clearness—for on all such subjects the mind of the girl seldom failed her—the present state of the enemy and the movements they had made since morning. Hist had been on the raft with her, until it quitted the shore; and was now some-

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where in the woods opposite to the castle, and did not intend to return to the camp, until night approached; when she hoped to be able to slip away from her companions, as they followed the shore on their way home, and conceal herself on the point. No one appeared to suspect the presence of Chingachgook, though it was necessarily known that an Indian had entered the ark, the previous night, and it was suspected that he had since appeared in and about the castle in the dress of a pale-face. Still some little doubt existed on the latter point; for as this was the season when white men might be expected to arrive, there was some fear that the garrison of the castle was increasing by these ordinary means. All this had Hist communicated to Hetty while the Indians were dragging them along shore; the distance, which exceeded six miles, affording abundance of time.

"Hist don't know herself, whether they suspect her or not, or whether they suspect *you*; but she hopes neither is the case. And now, Serpent, since I have told you so much from your betrothed," continued Hetty, unconsciously taking one of the Indian's hands, and playing with the fingers, as a child is often

seen to play with those of a parent; "you must let me tell you something from myself. When you marry Hist, you must be kind to her, and smile on her, as you do now on me; and not look cross, as some of the chiefs do at their squaws. Will you promise this?"

"Alway good to Wah!—too tender to twist hard; else she break."

"Yes, and smile too; you don't know how much a girl craves smiles from them she loves. Father scarce smiled on me once, while I was with him—and Hurry—yes—Hurry talked loud and laughed; but I don't think *he* smiled once either. You know the difference between a smile and a laugh?"

"Laugh, best. Hear Wah! laugh, think bird sing!"

"I know that; her laugh *is* pleasant, but *you* must smile. And then, Serpent, you mustn't make her carry burthens and hoe corn, as so many Indians do; but treat her more as the pale-faces treat their wives."

"Wah-ta!-Wah no pale-face—got red skin, red heart, red feelin's. All red; no pale-face. *Must* carry papoose."

"Every woman is willing to carry her child," said Hetty, smiling; "and there is no

harm in *that*. But you must love Hist, and be gentle and good to her; for she is gentle and good herself."

Chingachgook gravely bowed, and then he seemed to think this part of the subject might be dismissed. Before there was time for Hetty to resume her communications, the voice of Deerslayer was heard calling on his friend, in the outer room. At this summons the Serpent arose to obey, and Hetty joined her sister.

CHAPTER IV.

"'A stranger animal,' cries one,
'Sure never lived beneath the sun;
A lizard's body, lean and long,
A fish's head, a serpent's tongue,
Its tooth, with triple claw disjoined;
And what a length of tail behind!'"

MERRICK.

THE first act of the Delaware, on rejoining his friend, was to proceed gravely to disencumber himself of his civilized attire, and to stand forth an Indian warrior again. The protest of Deerslayer was met by his communicating the fact that the presence of an Indian in the hut, was known to the Iroquois, and that his maintaining the disguise would be more likely to direct suspicions to his real object, than if he came out openly as a member of a hostile tribe. When the latter understood the truth, and was told that he had been deceived in supposing the chief had succeeded in entering the ark undiscovered, he cheerfully consented to the change, since further attempt

at concealment was useless. A gentler feeling than the one avowed, however, lay at the bottom of the Indian's desire to appear as a son of the forest. He had been told that Hist was on the opposite shore; and nature so far triumphed over all distinctions of habit, and tribes, and people, as to reduce this young savage warrior to the level of a feeling which would have been found in the most refined inhabitant of a town, under similar circumstances. There was a mild satisfaction in believing that she he loved could see him; and as he walked out on the platform, in his scanty, native attire, an Apollo of the wilderness, a hundred of the tender fancies that fleet through lovers' brains, beset his imagination and softened his heart.

All this was lost on Deerslayer, who was no great adept in the mysteries of Cupid, but whose mind was far more occupied with the concerns that forced themselves on his attention, than with any of the truant fancies of love. He soon recalled his companion, therefore, to a sense of their actual condition, by summoning him to a sort of council of war, in which they were to settle their future course. In the dialogue that followed, the parties mu-

tually made each other acquainted with what had passed in their several interviews. Chingachgook was told the history of the treaty about the ransom; and Deerslayer heard the whole of Hetty's communications. The latter listened with generous interest to his friend's hopes, and promised cheerfully all the assistance he could lend.

"'Tis our main ar'n'd, Sarpent, as you know; this battling for the castle and old Hutter's darters, coming in as a sort of accident. Yes—yes—I'll be act*y*ve in helping little Hist, who's not only one of the best and handsomest maidens of the tribe, but the *very* best and handsomest. I've always encouraged you, chief, in that liking; and it's proper, too, that a great and ancient race like your'n shouldn't come to an end. If a woman of red skin and red gifts, could get to be near enough to me to wish her for a wife, I'd s'arch for just such another, but that can *never* be; no, that can *never* be. I'm glad Hetty has met with Hist, howsever, for though the first is a little short of wit and understanding, the last has enough for both. Yes, Sarpent," laughing heartily, "put 'em together, and two smarter gals isn't to be found in all York colony!"

"I will to go the Iroquois camp," returned the Delaware, gravely. "No one knows Chingachgook but Wah !, and a treaty for lives and scalps should be made by a chief! Give me the strange beasts, and let me take a canoe."

Deerslayer drooped his head, and played with the end of a fish-pole in the water, as he sate dangling his legs over the edge of the platform, like a man who was lost in thought, by the sudden occurrence of a novel idea. Instead of directly answering the proposal of his friend, he began to soliloquize; a circumstance, however, that in no manner rendered his words more true, as he was remarkable for saying what he thought, whether the remarks were addressed to himself, or to any one else.

"Yes—yes," he said, "this must be what they call love! I've heard say that it sometimes upsets reason altogether, leaving a young man as helpless, as to calculation and caution, as a brute beast. To think that the Sarpent should be so lost to reason, and cunning, and wisdom! We must, sartainly, 'manage to get Hist off, and have 'em married as soon as we get back to the tribe, or this war will be of no more use to the chief, than a hunt a little oncommon and extr'ornary. Yes — yes — he'll

never be the man he was, till this matter is off his mind, and he comes to his senses, like all the rest of mankind. Sarpent, you can't be in airnest, and therefore I shall say but little to your offer. But you're a chief, and will soon be sent out on the war-path at the head of parties, and I'll just ask if you'd think of putting your forces into the inimy's hands, afore the battle is fou't ?"

"Wah !" ejaculated the Indian.

"Ay—Wah !—I know well enough it's Wah !, and altogether Wah ! Ra'ally, Sarpent, I 'm consarned and mortified about you ! I never heard so weak an idee come from a chief, and he, too, one that's already got a name for being wise, young and inexper'enced as he is. Canoe you shan't have, so long as the v'ice of fri'ndship and warning can count for anything."

"My pale-face friend is right. A cloud came over the face of Chingachgook, and weakness got into his mind while his eyes were dim. My brother has a good memory for good deeds, and a weak memory for bad. He will forget."

"Yes, that's easy enough. Say no more about it, chief; but if another of them clouds blow near you, do your endivour to get out of its way. Clouds are bad enough in the

weather; but when they come to the reason, it gets to be serious. Now, sit down by me here, and let us calculate our movements a little, for we shall soon either have a truce and a peace, or we shall come to an active and bloody war. You see the vagabonds can make logs serve their turn, as well as the best raftsmen on the rivers; and it would be no great expl'ite for them to invade us in a body. I've been thinking of the wisdom of putting all old Tom's stores into the ark, of barring and locking up the castle, and of taking to the ark, altogether. That is moveable, and by keeping the sail up, and shifting places, we might worry through a great many nights, without them Canada wolves finding a way into our sheepfold."

Chingachgook listened to this plan with approbation. Did the negotiation fail, there was now little hope that the night would pass without an assault; and the enemy had sagacity enough to understand, that in carrying the castle, they would probably become masters of all it contained, the offered ransom included, and still retain the advantages they had hitherto gained. Some precaution of the sort appeared to be absolutely necessary; for now the num-

bers of the Iroquois were known, a night attack could scarcely be successfully met. It would be impossible to prevent the enemy from getting possession of the canoes and the ark, and the latter itself would be a hold in which the assailants would be as effectually protected against bullets as were those in the building. For a few minutes both men thought of sinking the ark in the shallow water, of bringing the canoes into the house, and of depending altogether on the castle for protection. But reflection satisfied them that, in the end, this expedient would fail. It was so easy to collect logs on the shore, and to construct a raft of almost any size, that it was certain the Iroquois, now they had turned their attention to such means, would resort to them seriously, so long as there was the certainty of success by perseverance. After deliberating maturely, and placing all the considerations fairly before them, the two young beginners in the art of forest warfare settled down into the opinion that the ark offered the only available means of security. This decision was no sooner come to than it was communicated to Judith. The girl had no serious objection to make, and then all four set about the measures necessary to carrying the plan into execution.

The reader will readily understand that Floating Tom's worldly goods were of no great amount. A couple of beds, some wearing apparel, the arms and ammunition, a few cooking utensils, with the mysterious and but half-examined chest, formed the principal items. These were all soon removed, the ark having been hauled on the eastern side of the building, so that the transfer could be made without being seen from the shore. It was thought unnecessary to disturb the heavier and coarser articles of furniture, as they were not required in the ark, and were but of little value in themselves. As great caution was necessary in removing the different objects, most of which were passed out of a window with a view to conceal what was going on, it required two or three hours before all could be effected. By the expiration of that time the raft made its appearance, moving from the shore. Deerslayer immediately had recourse to the glass, by the aid of which he perceived that two warriors were on it, though they appeared to be unarmed. The progress of the raft was slow, a circumstance that formed one of the great advantages that would be possessed by the scow in any future collision between them; the movements of the latter being comparatively swift and light. As there

was time to make the dispositions for the reception of the two dangerous visitors, every thing was prepared for them long before they had got near enough to be hailed. The Serpent and the girls retired into the building, where the former stood near the door well provided with rifles; while Judith watched the proceedings without through a loop. As for Deerslayer he had brought a stool to the edge of the platform, at the point towards which the raft was advancing, and taken his seat with his rifle leaning carelessly between his legs.

As the raft drew nearer every means possessed by the party in the castle was resorted to, in order to ascertain if their visitors had any fire-arms. Neither Deerslayer nor Chingachgook could discover any; but Judith, unwilling to trust to simple eye-sight, thrust the glass through the loop and directed it towards the hemlock boughs that lay between the two logs of the raft, forming a sort of flooring, as well as a seat for the use of the rowers. When the heavy-moving craft was within fifty feet of him, Deerslayer hailed the Hurons, directing them to cease rowing, it not being his intention to permit them to land. Compliance of course was necessary, and the two grim-looking war-

riors instantly quitted their seats, though the raft continued slowly to approach, until it had driven in much nearer to the platform.

"Are ye chiefs?" demanded Deerslayer with dignity. "Are ye chiefs?—or have the Mingos sent me warriors without names on such an ar'n'd? If so, the sooner ye go back the sooner the one will be likely to come that a warrior can talk with."

"Hugh!" exclaimed the elder of the two on the raft, rolling his glowing eyes over the different objects that were visible in and about the castle with a keenness that showed how little escaped him. "My brother is very proud, but Rivenoak (we use the literal translation of the term, writing as we do in English) is a name to make a Delaware turn pale."

"That's true, or it's a lie, Rivenoak, as it may be; but I am not likely to turn pale, seeing that I was born pale. What's your ar'n'd, and why do you come among light bark canoes on logs that are not even dug out?"

"The Iroquois are not ducks to walk on water! Let the pale-faces give them a canoe and they'll come in a canoe."

"That's more rational than likely to come to pass. We have but four canoes, and being

four persons, that's only one for each of us. We thank you for the offer, howsever, though we ask leave not to accept it. You are welcome, Iroquois, on your logs."

"Thanks—my young pale-face warrior—he has got a name—how do the chiefs call him?"

Deerslayer hesitated a moment, and a gleam of pride and human weakness came over him. He smiled, muttered between his teeth, and then looking up proudly, he said—

"Mingo, like all who are young and actyve, I've been known by different names at different times. One of your warriors whose spirit started for the happy-grounds of your people, as lately as yesterday morning, thought I desarved to be known by the name of Hawkeye; and this because my sight happened to be quicker than his own, when it got to be life or death atween us."

Chingachgook, who was attentively listening to all that passed, heard and understood this proof of passing weakness in his friend, and on a future occasion he questioned him more closely concerning the whole transaction on the point where Deerslayer had first taken human life. When he had got the whole truth, he did not fail to communicate it to the tribe; from

which time the young hunter was universally known among the Delawares by an appellation so honourably earned. As this, however, was a period posterior to all the incidents of this tale, we shall continue to call the young hunter by the name under which he has been first introduced to the reader. Nor was the Iroquois less struck with the vaunt of the white man. He knew of the death of his comrade, and had no difficulty in understanding the allusion; the intercourse between the conqueror and his victim on that occasion having been seen by several savages on the shore of the lake, who had been stationed at different points just within the margin of the bushes to watch the drifting canoes, and who had not time to reach the scene of action ere the victor had retired. The effect on this rude being of the forest was an exclamation of surprise; then such a smile of courtesy and wave of the hand succeeded, as would have done credit to Asiatic diplomacy. The two Iroquois spoke to each other in low terms, and both drew near the end of the raft that was closest to the platform.

"My brother, Hawkeye, has sent a message to the Hurons," resumed Rivenoak, "and it has made their hearts very glad. They hear

he has images of beasts with two tails! Will he show them to his friends?"

"Inimies would be truer," returned Deerslayer; "but sound isn't sense, and does little harm. Here is one of the images; I toss it to you under faith of treaties. If it's not returned, the rifle will settle the p'int atween us."

The Iroquois seemed to acquiesce in the conditions, and Deerslayer arose and prepared to toss one of the elephants to the raft, both parties using all the precaution that was necessary to prevent its loss. As practice renders men expert in such things, the little piece of ivory was soon successfully transferred from one hand to the other; and then followed another scene on the raft, in which astonishment and delight got the mastery of Indian stoicism. These two grim old warriors manifested even more feeling, as they examined the curiously-wrought chess-man, than had been betrayed by the boy; for, in the case of the latter, recent schooling had interposed its influence; while the men, like all who are sustained by well-established characters, were not ashamed to let some of their emotions be discovered. For a few minutes they apparently lost all conscious-

ness of their situation in the intense scrutiny they bestowed on a material so fine, work so highly wrought, and an animal so extraordinary. The lip of the moose is, perhaps, the nearest approach to the trunk of the elephant that is to be found in the American forest; but this resemblance was far from being sufficiently striking to bring the new creature within the range of their habits and ideas, and the more they studied the image the greater was their astonishment. Nor did these children of the forest mistake the structure on the back of the elephant for a part of the animal. They were familiar with horses and oxen, and had seen towers in the Canadas, and found nothing surprising in creatures of burthen. Still, by a very natural association, they supposed the carving meant to represent that the animal they saw was of a strength sufficient to carry a fort on its back; a circumstance that in no degree lessened their wonder.

"Has my pale-face brother any more such beasts?" at last the senior of the Iroquois asked, in a sort of petitioning manner.

"There's more where them came from, Mingo," was the answer; "one is enough, however, to buy off fifty scalps."

"One of my prisoners is a great warrior—tall as a pine—strong as the moose—active as a deer—fierce as the panther! Some day he'll be a great chief, and lead the army of King George!"

"Tut—tut—Mingo; Harry Hurry is Harry Hurry, and you'll never make more than a corporal of him, if you do that. He's tall enough of a sartainty; but that's of no use, as he only hits his head ag'in the branches as he goes through the forest. He's strong too; but a strong body isn't a strong head; and the king's generals are not chosen for their sinews. He's swift, if you will, but a rifle-bullet is swifter; and as for f'erceness, it's no great recommend to a soldier; they that think they feel the stoutest, often givin' out at the pinch. No—no—you'll never make Hurry's scalp pass for more than a good head of curly hair, and a rattlepate beneath it!"

"My old prisoner very wise—king of the lake—great warrior, wise counsellor!"

"Well, there's them that might gainsay all this, too, Mingo. A very wise man wouldn't be apt to be taken in so foolish a manner as befel Master Hutter; and if he gives good counsel, he must have listened to bad, in all

that affair. There's only one king of this lake, and he's a long way off, and isn't likely ever to see it. Floating Tom is some such king of this region, as the wolf that prowls through the woods is king of the forest. A beast with two tails is well worth two such scalps!"

"But my brother has another beast?—He will give two," holding up as many fingers, "for old father?"

"Floating Tom is no father of mine, but he'll fare none the worse for that. As for giving two beasts for his scalp, and each beast with two tails, it is quite beyond reason. Think yourself well off, Mingo, if you make a much worse trade."

By this time the self-command of Rivenoak had got the better of his wonder, and he began to fall back on his usual habits of cunning, in order to drive the best bargain he could. It would be useless to relate more than the substance of the desultory dialogue that followed, in which the Indian manifested no little management in endeavouring to recover the ground lost under the influence of surprise. He even affected to doubt whether any original for the image of the beast existed, and asserted that the oldest Indian had never

heard a tradition of any such animal. Little did either of them imagine at the time, that long ere a century elapsed, the progress of civilization would bring even much more extraordinary and rare animals into that region, as curiosities to be gazed at by the curious, and that the particular beast, about which the disputants contended, would be seen laving its sides and swimming in the very sheet of water on which they had met. As is not uncommon on such occasions, one of the parties got a little warm in the course of the discussion; for Deerslayer met all the arguments and prevarications of his subtle opponent with his own cool directness of manner, and unmoved love of truth. What an elephant was, he knew little better than the savage; but he perfectly understood that the carved pieces of ivory must have some such value in the eyes of an Iroquois, as a bag of gold, or a package of beaver-skins, would in those of a trader. Under the circumstances, therefore, he felt it to be prudent not to concede too much at first, since there existed a nearly unconquerable obstacle to making the transfers, even after the contracting parties had actually agreed upon the terms. Keeping this difficulty in view, he held

the extra chess-men in reserve, as a means of smoothing any difficulty in the moment of need.

At length the savage pretended that further negotiation was useless, since he could not be so unjust to his tribe as to part with the honour and emoluments of two excellent full-grown male scalps, for a consideration so trifling as two toys like those he had seen—and he prepared to take his departure. Both parties now felt as men are wont to feel, when a bargain that each is anxious to conclude, is on the eve of being broken off, in consequence of too much pertinacity in the way of management. The effect of the disappointment was very different, however, on the respective individuals. Deerslayer was mortified and filled with regret; for he not only felt for the prisoners, but he also felt deeply for the two girls. The conclusion of the treaty, therefore, left him melancholy and full of regret. With the savage, his defeat produced the savage desire of revenge. In a moment of excitement, he had loudly announced his intention to say no more; and he felt equally enraged with himself and with his cool opponent, that he had permitted a pale-face to manifest more indifference and self-command than an Indian chief. When he began to urge his raft away from the platform,

his countenance lowered, and his eye glowed even while he affected a smile of amity and a gesture of courtesy at parting.

It took some little time to overcome the *vis inertiæ* of the logs, and while this was doing by the silent Indian, Rivenoak stalked over the hemlock boughs that lay between the logs, in silent ferocity, eyeing keenly the while, the hut, the platform, and the person of his late disputant. Once he spoke in low, quick terms to his companion, and he stirred the boughs with his feet, like an animal that is restive. At that moment, the watchfulness of Deerslayer had a little abated, for he sat musing on the means of renewing the negotiation without giving too much advantage to the other side. It was perhaps fortunate for him that the keen and bright eyes of Judith were as vigilant as ever. At the instant when the young man was least on his guard, and his enemy was the most on the alert, she called out in a warning voice to the former, most opportunely giving the alarm.

"Be on your guard, Deerslayer," the girl cried; "I see rifles with the glass beneath the hemlock brush, and the Iroquois is loosening them with his feet!"

It would seem that the enemy had carried their artifices so far as to employ an agent who understood English. The previous dialogue had taken place in his own language, but it was evident, by the sudden manner in which his feet ceased their treacherous occupation, and in which the countenance of Rivenoak changed from sullen ferocity to a smile of courtesy, that the call of the girl was understood. Signing to his companion to cease his efforts to set the logs in motion, he advanced to the end of the raft which was nearest to the platform, and spoke.

"Why should Rivenoak and his brother leave any cloud between them?" he said. "They are both wise, both brave, and both generous, they ought to part friends. One beast shall be the price of one prisoner."

"And Mingo," answered the other, delighted to renew the negotiation on almost any terms, and determined to clinch the bargain, if possible, by a little extra liberality, "you'll see that a pale-face knows how to pay a full price when he trades with an open heart, and an open hand. Keep the beast that you had forgotten to give back to me, as you was about to start, and which I forgot to ask for, on account

of consarn at parting in anger. Show it to your chiefs. When you bring us our fri'nds, two more shall be added to it—and—" hesitating a moment in distrust of the expediency of so great a concession, then, deciding in its favour—" and, if we see them afore the sun sets, we may find a fourth, to make up an even number."

This settled the matter. Every gleam of discontent vanished from the dark countenance of the Iroquois, and he smiled as graciously, if not as sweetly, as Judith Hutter herself. The piece already in his possession was again examined, and an ejaculation of pleasure showed how much he was pleased with this unexpected termination of the affair. In point of fact, both he and Deerslayer had momentarily forgotten what had become of the subject of their discussion, in the warmth of their feelings; but such had not been the case with Rivenoak's companion. This man retained the piece, and had fully made up his mind, were it claimed under such circumstances as to render its return necessary, to drop it in the lake, trusting to his being able to find it again, at some future day. This desperate expedient, however, was no longer necessary, and after

repeating the terms of agreement, and professing to understand them, the two Indians finally took their departure, moving slowly towards the shore.

"Can any faith be put in such wretches?" asked Judith, when she and Hetty had come out on the platform, and were standing at the side of Deerslayer, watching the dull movement of the logs. "Will they not rather keep the toy they have, and send us off some bloody proofs of their getting the better of us in cunning, by way of boasting? I've heard of acts as bad as this."

"No doubt—Judith; no manner of doubt, if it wasn't for Indian natur'. But I'm no judge of a red-skin if that two-tail'd beast doesn't set the whole tribe in some such stir as a stick raises in a beehive! Now there's the Sarpent, a man with narves like flint, and no more cur'osity in every-day consarns than is befitting prudence.—Why he was so overcome with the sight of the creatur', carved as it is in bone, that I felt ashamed for him! That's just their gifts, however, and one can't well quarrel with a man for his gifts, when they are lawful. Chingachgook will soon get over his weakness and remember that he's a

chief, and that he comes of a great stock, and has a renowned name to support and uphold; but as for yonder scamps, there'll be no peace among 'em until they think they've got possession of everything of the natur' of that bit of carved bone that's to be found among Thomas Hutter's stores !"

"They only know of the elephants, and can have no hopes about the other things."

"That's true, Judith; still, covetousness is a craving feelin'. They'll say, if the pale-faces have these curious beasts with two tails, who knows but they've got some with three, or for that matter, with four! That's what the schoolmasters call nat'ral arithmetic, and 'twill be sartain to beset the feelin's of savages. They'll never be easy till the truth is known."

"Do you think, Deerslayer," inquired Hetty, in her simple and innocent manner, "that the Iroquois won't let father and Hurry go?—I read to them several of the very best verses in the whole Bible, and you see what they have done already."

The hunter, as he always did, listened kindly and even affectionately to Hetty's remarks; then he mused a moment in silence. There was something like a flush on his cheek as he answered, after quite a minute had passed.

"I don't know whether a white man ought to be ashamed or not, to own he can't read; but such is my case, Judith. You are skilful, I find, in all such matters, while I have only studied the hand of God as it is seen in the hills and the valleys, the mountain-tops, the streams, the forest, and the springs. Much l'arning may be got in this way, as well as out of books; and yet I sometimes think it is a white man's gift to read! When I hear from the mouths of the Moravians the words of which Hetty speaks, they raise a longing in my mind, and I think I *will* know how to read 'em myself; but the game in summer, and the traditions, and lessons in war, and other matters, have always kept me behindhand."

"Shall I teach you, Deerslayer?" asked Hetty, earnestly. "I'm weak-minded, they say, but I can read as well as Judith. It might save your life to know how to read the Bible to the savages, and it will certainly save your soul, for mother told me *that*, again and again!"

"Thankee, Hetty—yes, thankee, with all my heart. There are like to be too stirring times for much idleness; but after it's peace, and I come to see you ag'in on this lake, then I'll give myself up to it, as if 'twas pleasure

and profit in a single business. Perhaps I ought to be ashamed, Judith, that 'tis so; but truth is truth. As for these Iroquois, 'tisn't very likely they'll forget a beast with two tails on account of a varse or two from the Bible. I rather expect they'll give up the prisoners, and trust to some sarcumvention or other to get 'em back ag'in, with us and all in the castle, and the ark in the bargain. Howsever, we must humour the vagabonds; first to get your father and Hurry out of their hands, and next, to keep the peace atween us, until such time as the Sarpent there can make out to get off his betrothed wife. If there's any sudden outbreakin' of anger and ferocity, the Indians will send off all their women and children to the camp, at once; whereas, by keeping 'em calm and trustful, we may manage to meet Hist at the spot she has mentioned. Rather than have the bargain fall through now, I'd throw in half a dozen of them effigy bow-and-arrow men, such as we've plenty in the chist."

Judith cheerfully assented, for she would have resigned even the flowered brocade. rather than not redeem her father, and please Deerslayer.

The prospects of success were now so en-

couraging, as to raise the spirits of all in the castle, though a due watchfulness on the movements of the enemy, was maintained. Hour passed after hour, notwithstanding, and the sun had once more begun to fall towards the summits of the western hills, and yet no signs were seen of the return of the raft. By dint of sweeping the shore with the glass, Deerslayer at length discovered a place in the dense and dark woods, where he entertained no doubt the Iroquois were assembled in considerable numbers. It was near the thicket whence the raft had issued, and a little rill that trickled into the lake announced the vicinity of a spring. Here, then, the savages were probably holding their consultation, and the decision was to be made that went to settle the question of life or death for the prisoners. There was one ground for hope in spite of the delay, however, that Deerslayer did not fail to place before his anxious companions. It was far more probable that the Indians had left their prisoners in the camp, than that they had encumbered themselves, by causing them to follow through the woods, a party that was out on a merely temporary excursion. If such was the fact, it required considerable time to

send a messenger the necessary distance, and to bring the two white men to the spot where they were to embark. Encouraged by these reflections, a new stock of patience was gathered, and the declension of the sun was viewed with less alarm.

The result justified Deerslayer's conjecture. Not long before the sun had finally disappeared, the two logs were seen coming out of the thicket, again; and, as it drew near, Judith announced that her father and Hurry, both of them pinioned, lay on the bushes in the centre. As before, the Indians were rowing. The latter seemed to be conscious that the lateness of the hour demanded unusual exertions, and contrary to the habits of their people, who are ever averse to toil, they laboured hard at the rude substitutes for oars. In consequence of this diligence, the raft occupied its old station, in about half the time that had been taken in the previous visits.

Even after the conditions were so well understood, and matters had proceeded so far, the actual transfer of the prisoners was not a duty to be executed without difficulty. The Iroquois were compelled to place great reliance on the good faith of their foes, though it was re-

luctantly given, and was yielded to necessity rather than to confidence. As soon as Hutter and Hurry should be released, the party in the castle, numbered two to one, as opposed to those on the raft, and escape by flight was out of the question, as the former had three bark canoes, to say nothing of the defences of the house and the ark. All this was understood by both parties, and it is probable the arrangement never could have been completed, had not the honest countenance and manner of Deerslayer wrought their usual effect on Rivenoak.

"My brother knows I put faith in *him*," said the latter, as he advanced with Hutter, whose legs had been released to enable the old man to ascend to the platform. "One scalp—one more beast."

"Stop, Mingo," interrupted the hunter, "keep your prisoner a moment. I have to go and seek the means of payment."

This excuse, however, though true in part, was principally a fetch. Deerslayer left the platform, and entering the house, he directed Judith to collect all the arms, and to conceal them in her own room. He then spoke earnestly to the Delaware, who stood on guard as before, near the entrance of the building, put

the three remaining castles in his pocket and returned.

"You are welcome back to your old abode, Master Hutter," said Deerslayer, as he helped the other up on the platform, slily passing into the hand of Rivenoak, at the same time, another of the castles. "You'll find your darters right glad to see you; and here's Hetty come herself, to say as much in her own behalf."

Here the hunter stopped speaking of his own accord, and broke out into a hearty fit of his silent and peculiar laughter. Hurry's legs were just released, and he had been placed on his feet. So tightly had the ligatures been drawn, that the use of his limbs was not immediately recovered, and the young giant presented, in good sooth, a very helpless and a somewhat ludicrous picture. It was this unusual spectacle, particularly the bewildered countenance, that excited the merriment of Deerslayer.

"You look like a girdled pine in a clearin', Harry Hurry, that is rocking in a gale," said Deerslayer, checking his unseasonable mirth, more from delicacy to the others, than from any respect to the liberated captive. "I'm glad, howsever, to see that you haven't had

your hair dressed by any of the Iroquois barbers in your late visit to their camp."

"Harkee, Deerslayer," returned the other, a little fiercely; "it will be prudent for you to deal less in mirth, and more in friendship, on this occasion. Act like a christian, for once, and not like a laughing gal in a country school, when the master's back is turned, and just tell me whether there's any feet, or not, at the end of these legs of mine. I think I can see them, but as for feelin', they might as well be down on the banks of the Mohawk, as where they seem to be."

"You've come off whole, Hurry, and that's not a little," answered the other, secretly passing to the Indian the remainder of the stipulated ransom, and making an earnest sign at the same moment for him to commence his retreat. "You've come off whole, feet and all, and are only a little numb, from a tight fit of the withes. 'Natur' 'll soon set the blood in motion, and then you may begin to dance, to celebrate what I call a most wonderful and onexpected deliverance from a den of wolves."

Deerslayer released the arms of his friends, as each landed, and the two were now stamping and limping about on the platform, growl-

ing, and uttering denunciations, as they endeavoured to help the returning circulation. They had been tethered too long, however, to regain the use of their limbs in a moment; and the Indians being quite as diligent on their return, as on their advance, the raft was fully a hundred yards from the castle, when Hurry, turning accidentally in that direction, discovered how fast it was getting beyond the reach of his vengeance. By this time he could move with tolerable facility, though still numb, and awkward. Without considering his own situation, however, he seized the rifle that leaned against the shoulder of Deerslayer, and attempted to cock and present it. The young hunter was too quick for him. Seizing the piece, he wrenched it from the hands of the giant; not, however, until it had gone off in the struggle, when pointed directly upward. It is probable that Deerslayer could have prevailed in such a contest, on account of the condition of Hurry's limbs; but the instant the gun went off, the latter yielded, and stumped towards the house, raising his legs at each step, quite a foot from the ground, from an uncertainty of the actual position of his feet. But he had been anticipated by Judith. The whole stock of Hutter's

arms, which had been left in the building, as a resource in the event of a sudden outbreaking of hostilities, had been removed, and were already secreted, agreeably to Deerslayer's directions. In consequence of this precaution, no means offered by which March could put his designs in execution.

Disappointed in his revenge, Hurry seated himself, and like Hutter, for half an hour, he was too much occupied in endeavouring to restore the circulation, and in regaining the use of his limbs, to indulge in any other reflections. By the end of this time, the raft had disappeared; and night was beginning to throw her shadows once more over the whole sylvan scene. Before darkness was completely set in, and while the girls were preparing the evening meal, Deerslayer related to Hutter an outline of the events that had taken place, and gave him a history of the means he had adopted for the security of his children and property.

CHAPTER V.

"As long as Edwarde rules thys lande,
Ne quiet you wylle know;
Yoùr sonnes and husbandes shall be slayne,
And brookes with bloode shall flowe."

"You leave youre goode and lawfulle kynge,
Whenne ynne adversitye;
Like me, untoe the true cause stycke,
And for the true cause dye."

CHATTERTON.

THE calm of evening was again in singular contrast, while its gathering gloom was in as singular unison, with the passions of men. The sun was set, and the rays of the retiring luminary had ceased to gild the edges of the few clouds that had sufficient openings to admit the passage of its fading light. The canopy overhead was heavy and dense, promising another night of darkness, but the surface of the lake was scarcely disturbed by a ripple. There was a little air, though it scarce deserved to be termed wind. Still, being damp and heavy, it had a certain force. The party in the

castle were as gloomy and silent as the scene. The two ransomed prisoners felt humbled and dishonoured, but their humility partook of the rancour of revenge. They were far more disposed to remember the indignity with which they had been treated during the last few hours of their captivity, than to feel grateful for the previous indulgence. Then that keen-sighted monitor conscience, by reminding them of the retributive justice of all they had endured, goaded them, rather to turn the tables on their enemies, than to accuse themselves. As for the others, they were thoughtful equally from regret and joy. Deerslayer and Judith felt most of the former sensation, though from very different causes, while Hetty for the moment was perfectly happy. The Delaware had also lively pictures of felicity in the prospect of so soon regaining his betrothed. Under such circumstances, and in this mood, all were taking the evening meal.

"Old Tom!" cried Hurry, bursting into a fit of boisterous laughter, "you look'd amazin'ly like a tethered bear, as you was stretched on them hemlock boughs, and I only wonder you didn't growl more. Well, it's over, and syth's and lamentations won't mend the matter!

There's the blackguard Rivenoak, he that brought us off, has an oncommon scalp, and I 'd give as much for it myself as the Colony. Yes, I feel as rich as the governor, in these matters now, and will lay down with them doubloon for doubloon. Judith, darling, did you mourn for me much, when I was in the hands of the Philipsteins."

The last were a family of German descent on the Mohawk, to whom Hurry had a great antipathy, and whom he had confounded with the enemies of Judea.

"Our tears have raised the lake, Harry March, as you might have seen by the shore!" returned Judith, with a feigned levity that she was far from feeling. "That Hetty and I should have grieved for father, was to be expected; but we fairly rained tears for you."

"We *were* sorry for poor Hurry, as well as for father, Judith!" put in her innocent and unconscious sister.

"True, girl, true; but we feel sorrow for everybody that 's in trouble, you know," returned the other in a quick, admonitory manner, and a low tone. "Nevertheless, we are glad to see you, Master March, and out of the hands of the Philipsteins, too."

"Yes, they 're a bad set, and so is the other

brood of 'em, down on the river. It's a wonderment to me, how you got us off, Deerslayer; and I forgive you the interference that prevented my doin' justice on that vagabond, for this small service. Let us into the secret, that we may do you the same good turn, at need. Was it by lying, or by coaxing?"

"By neither, Hurry, but by buying. We paid a ransom for you both, and that, too, at a price so high, you had well be on your guard ag'in another captyvement, lest our stock of goods shouldn't hold out."

"A ransom!—Old Tom has paid the fiddler, then, for nothing of mine would have bought off the hair, much less the skin. I didn't think men as keen set as them vagabonds, would let a fellow up so easy, when they had him fairly at a close hug, and floored. But money is money, and somehow it's unnat'ral hard to withstand. Indian, or white man, 'tis pretty much the same. It must be owned, Judith, there 's a considerable of human natur' in mankind ginirally, after all!"

Hutter now rose, and signing to Deerslayer, he led him to an inner room, where, in answer to his questions, he first learned the price that had been paid for his release. The old man expressed neither resentment nor surprise at the

inroad that had been made on his chest, though he did manifest some curiosity to know how far the investigation of its contents had been carried. He also inquired where the key had been found. The habitual frankness of Deerslayer prevented any prevarication, and the conference soon terminated by the return of the two to the outer room, or that which served for the double purpose of parlour and kitchen.

"I wonder if it 's peace or war, between us and the savages!" exclaimed Hurry, just as Deerslayer, who had paused for a single instant, listened attentively, and was passing through the outer door without stopping. "This givin' up captives has a friendly look, and when men have traded together, on a fair and honourable footing, they ought to part fri'nds, for that occasion, at least. Come back, Deerslayer, and let us have your judgment, for I 'm beginnin' to think more of you, since your late behaviour, than I used to do."

"There 's an answer to your question, Hurry, since you 're in such haste to come ag'in to blows."

As Deerslayer spoke, he threw on the table, on which the other was reclining with one elbow, a sort of miniature fagot, composed of a

dozen sticks bound tightly together with a deer-skin thong. March seized it eagerly, and holding it close to a blazing knot of pine that lay on the hearth, and which gave out all the light there was in the room, ascertained that the ends of the several sticks had been dipped in blood.

"If this isn't plain English," said the reckless frontier man, "it 's plain Indian! Here 's what they call a diclaration of war, down at York, Judith. How did you come by this defiance, Deerslayer?"

"Fairly enough. It lay not a minut' since, in what you call Floatin' Tom's door yard."

"How came it there? It never fell from the clouds, Judith, as little toads sometimes do, and then it don't rain. You must prove where it come from, Deerslayer, or we shall suspect some design to skear them that would have lost their wits long ago, if fear could drive 'em away."

Deerslayer had approached a window, and cast a glance out of it, on the dark aspect of the lake. As if satisfied with what he beheld, he drew near Hurry, and took the bundle of sticks into his own hand, examining it attentively.

"Yes, this is an Indian dicliration of war, sure enough," he said, "and it's a proof how little you're suited to be on the path it has travelled, Harry March, that it has got here, and you never the wiser as to the means. The savages may have left the scalp on your head, but they must have taken off the *ears;* else you'd have heard the stirring of the water made by the lad as he come off ag'in on his two logs. His ar'n'd was to throw these sticks at our door, as much as to say, we've struck the war-pool since the trade; and the next thing will be to strike *you.*"

"The prowling wolves! But hand me that rifle, Judith, and I'll send an answer back to the vagabonds through their messenger."

"Not while I stand by, Master March," coolly put in Deerslayer, motioning for the other to forbear. "Faith is faith, whether given to a red-skin, or to a Christian. The lad lighted a knot, and came off fairly, under its blaze, to give us this warning; and no man here should harm him, while empl'yed on such an ar'n'd. There's no use in words, for the boy is too cunning to leave the knot burning, now his business is done, and the night is already too dark for a rifle to have any sartainty."

"That may be true enough, as to a gun, but there's virtue still in a canoe," answered Hurry, passing towards the door with enormous strides, carrying a rifle in his hands. "The being doesn't live that shall stop me from following, and bringing back that riptyle's scalp. The more on 'em that you crush in the egg, the fewer there'll be to dart at you in the woods!"

Judith trembled like the aspen, she scarce knew why herself, though there was the prospect of a scene of violence; for if Hurry was fierce and overbearing in the consciousness of his vast strength, Deerslayer had about him the calm determination that promises greater perseverance, and a resolution more likely to effect its object. It was the stern, resolute eye of the latter, rather than the noisy vehemence of the first, that excited her apprehensions. Hurry soon reached the spot where the canoe was fastened, but not before Deerslayer had spoke in a quick, earnest voice to the Serpent, in Delaware. The latter had been the first, in truth, to hear the sounds of the oars, and he had gone upon the platform in jealous watchfulness. The light satisfied him that a message was coming, and when the boy cast his bundle of sticks at his feet, it neither moved his anger, nor induced surprise. He merely stood at

watch, rifle in hand, to make certain that no treachery lay behind the defiance. As Deerslayer now called to him, he stepped into the canoe, and quick as thought removed the paddles. Hurry was furious when he found that he was deprived of the means of proceeding. He first approached the Indian with loud menaces, and even Deerslayer stood aghast at the probable consequences. March shook his sledge-hammer fists, and flourished his arms, as he drew near the Indian, and all expected he would attempt to fell the Delaware to the earth; one of them, at least, was well aware that such an experiment would be followed by immediate bloodshed. But even Hurry was awed by the stern composure of the chief, and he, too, knew that such a man was not to be outraged with impunity; he, therefore, turned to vent his rage on Deerslayer, where he foresaw no consequences so terrible. What might have been the result of this second demonstration, if completed, is unknown, since it was never made.

"Hurry," said a gentle, soothing voice at his elbow, "it's wicked to be so angry, and God will not overlook it. The Iroquois treated

you well, and they didn't take *your* scalp, though you and father wanted to take *theirs*."

The influence of mildness on passion is well known. Hetty, too, had earned a sort of consideration, that had never before been enjoyed by her, through the self-devotion and decision of her recent conduct, Perhaps her established mental imbecility, by removing all distrust of a wish to control, aided her influence. Let the cause be as questionable as it might, the effect was sufficiently certain. Instead of throttling his old fellow-traveller, Hurry turned to the girl, and poured out a portion of his discontent, if none of his anger, in her attentive ears.

" 'Tis too bad, Hetty!" he exclaimed; " as bad as a county gaol, or a lack of beaver, to get a creatur' into your very trap and then to see it get off. As much as six first quality skins, in valie, has paddled off on them clumsy logs, when twenty strokes of a well-turned paddle, would overtake 'em. I say in valie, for as to the boy in the way of natur', he is only a boy, and is worth neither more nor less than one. Deerslayer, you've been ontrue to your fr'inds in letting such a chance slip through my fingers as well as your own."

The answer was given quietly, but with a

voice as steady as a fearless nature, and the consciousness of rectitude could make it. "I should have been ontrue to the right, had I done otherwise," returned the Deerslayer, steadily; "and neither you, nor any other man has authority to demand that much of me. The lad came on a lawful business, and the meanest red-skin that roams the woods, would be ashamed of not respecting his ar'n'd. But he's now far beyond your reach, Master March, and there's little use in talking, like a couple of women, of what can no longer be helped."

So saying, Deerslayer turned away, like one resolved to waste no more words on the subject, while Hutter pulled Harry by the sleeve, and led him into the ark. There they sat long in private conference. In the mean time, the Indian and his friend had their secret consultation; for, though it wanted some three or four hours to the rising of the star, the former could not abstain from canvassing his scheme, and from opening his heart to the other. Judith, too, yielded to her softer feelings, and listened to the whole of Hetty's artless narrative of what occurred after she landed. The woods had few terrors for either of these girls, educated as they had been, and accustomed as

they were to look out daily at their rich expanse or to wander beneath their dark shades; but the elder sister felt that she would have hesitated about thus venturing alone into an Iroquois camp. Concerning Hist, Hetty was not very communicative. She spoke of her kindness, and gentleness, and of the meeting in the forest; but the secret of Chingachgook was guarded with a shrewdness and fidelity, that many a sharper-witted girl might have failed to display.

At length the several conferences were broken up by the reappearance of Hutter on the platform. Here he assembled the whole party, and communicated as much of his intentions as he deemed expedient. Of the arrangement made by Deerslayer, to abandon the castle during the night and to take refuge in the ark, he entirely approved. It struck him as it had the others, as the only effectual means of escaping destruction. Now that the savages had turned their attention to the construction of rafts, no doubt could exist of their, at least, making an attempt to carry the building, and the message of the bloody sticks sufficiently showed their confidence in their own success. In short, the old man viewed the night as cri-

tical, and he called on all to get ready as soon as possible, in order to abandon the dwelling, temporarily at least, if not for ever.

These communications made, every thing proceeded promptly and with intelligence; the castle was secured in the manner already described, the canoes were withdrawn from the dock and fastened to the ark by the side of the other; the few necessaries that had been left in the house, were transferred to the cabin, the fire was extinguished and all embarked.

The vicinity of the hills, with their drapery of pines, had the effect to render nights that were obscure, darker than common on the lake. As usual, however, a belt of comparative light was stretched through the centre of the sheet, while it was within the shadows of the mountains, that the gloom rested most heavily on the water. The island, or castle, stood in this belt of comparative light, but still the night was so dark, as to cover the departure of the ark. At the distance of an observer on the shore, her movements could not be seen at all, more particularly as a back-ground of dark hill-side filled up the perspective of every view that was taken diagonally or directly across the water. The prevalent wind on the lakes

of that region is west, but owing to the avenues formed by the mountains, it is frequently impossible to tell the true direction of the currents, as they often vary within short distances, and brief differences of time. This is truer in light fluctuating puffs of air, than in steady breezes; though the squalls of even the latter are familiarly known to be uncertain and baffling in all mountainous regions and narrow waters. On the present occasion, Hutter himself, (as he shoved the ark from her berth, at the side of the platform,) was at a loss to pronounce which way the wind blew. In common, this difficulty was solved by the clouds, which, floating high above the hill tops, as a matter of course obeyed the currents; but now the whole vault of heaven seemed a mass of gloomy wall. Not an opening of any sort was visible, and Chingachgook was already trembling lest the non-appearance of the star might prevent his betrothed from being punctual to her appointment. Under these circumstances, Hutter hoisted his sail, seemingly with the sole intention of getting away from the castle, as it might be dangerous to remain much longer in its vicinity. The air soon filled the cloth, and when the scow was got under

command, and the sail was properly trimmed, it was found that the direction was southerly, inclining towards the eastern shore. No better course offering for the purposes of the party, the singular craft was suffered to skim the surface of the water in this direction for more than an hour, when a change in the currents of the air drove them over towards the camp.

Deerslayer watched all the movements of Hutter and Harry with jealous attention. At first, he did not know whether to ascribe the course they held to accident, or to design; but he now began to suspect the latter. Familiar as Hutter was with the lake, it was easy to deceive one who had little practice on the water; and let his intentions be what they might, it was evident, ere two hours had elapsed, that the ark had got sufficient space to be within a hundred rods of the shore, directly abreast of the known position of the camp. For a considerable time previously to reaching this point, Hurry, who had some knowledge of the Algonquin language, had been in close conference with the Indian, and the result was now announced by the latter to Deerslayer, who had been a cold, not to say distrusted, looker-on of all that passed.

"My old father, and my young brother, the Big Pine,"—for so the Delaware had named March—"want to see Huron scalps at their belts," said Chingachgook to his friend. "There is room for some on the girdle of the Sarpent, and his people will look for them when he goes back to his village. Their eyes must not be left long in a fog, but they must see what they look for. I know that my brother has a white hand; he will not strike even the dead. He will wait for us; when we come back, he will not hide his face from shame for his friend. The great Serpent of the Mohicans must be worthy to go on the war-path with Hawk-eye."

"Ay, ay, Sarpent, I see how it is; that name's to stick, and in time I shall get to be known by it instead of Deerslayer; well, if such honours will come, the humblest of us all must be willing to abide by 'em. As for your looking for scalps, it belongs to your gifts, and I see no harm in it. Be marciful, Sarpent, howsever; be marciful, I beseech of you. It surely can do no harm to a red-skin's honour to show a little marcy. As for the old man, the father of two young women, who might ripen better feelin's in his heart, and Harry

March, here, who, pine as he is, might better bear the fruit of a more christianized tree, as for *them* two, I leave 'em in the hands of the white-man's God. Wasn't it for the bloody sticks, no man should go ag'in the Mingos this night, seein' that it would dishonour our faith and characters; but them that crave blood can't complain if blood is shed at their call. Still, Sarpent, you can be *marciful*. Don't begin your career with the wails of women, and the cries of children. Bear yourself so that Hist will smile, and not weep, when she meets you. Go, then, and the Manitou presarve you."

"My brother will stay here with the scow. Wah! will soon be standing on the shore waiting, and Chingachgook must hasten."

The Indian then joined his two co-adventurers, and first lowering the sail, they all three entered a canoe, and left the side of the ark. Neither Hutter nor March spoke to Deerslayer concerning their object, or the probable length of their absence. All this had been confided to the Indian, who had acquitted himself of the trust with characteristic brevity. As soon as the canoe was out of sight, and that occurred ere the paddles had given a dozen strokes, Deer-

slayer made the best dispositions he could to keep the ark as nearly stationary as possible; and then he sat down in the end of the scow to chew the cud of his own bitter reflections. It was not long, however, before he was joined by Judith, who sought every occasion to be near him, managing her attack on his affections with the address that was suggested by native coquetry, aided by no little practice, but which received much of its most dangerous power from the touch of feeling that threw around her manner, voice, accents, thoughts, and acts, the indescribable witchery of natural tenderness. Leaving the young hunter exposed to these dangerous assailants, it has become our more immediate business to follow the party in the canoe to the shore.

The controlling influence that led Hutter and Hurry to repeat their experiment against the camp, was precisely that which had induced the first attempt, a little heightened, perhaps, by the desire of revenge. But neither of these two rude beings, so ruthless in all things that touched the rights and interests of the red man, though possessing veins of human feeling on other matters, was much actuated by any other desire than a heartless longing for profit.

Hurry had felt angered at his sufferings, when first liberated, it is true, but that emotion had soon disappeared in the habitual love of gold, which he sought with the reckless avidity of a needy spendthrift, rather than with the ceaseless longings of a miser. In short, the motive that urged them both so soon to go against the Hurons, was an habitual contempt of their enemy, acting on the unceasing cupidity of prodigality. The additional chances of success, however, had their place in the formation of the second enterprise. It was known that a large portion of the warriors—perhaps all—were encamped for the night, abreast of the castle, and it was hoped that the scalps of helpless victims would be the consequence. To confess the truth, Hutter in particular—he who had just left two daughters behind him—expected to find few besides women and children in the camp. This fact had been but slightly alluded to in his communications with Hurry, and with Chingachgook it had been kept entirely out of view. If the Indian thought of it at all, it was known only to himself.

Hutter steered the canoe; Hurry had manfully taken his post in the bows, and Chingachgook stood in the centre. We say stood,

for all three were so skilled in the management of that species of frail bark, as to be able to keep erect positions in the midst of the darkness. The approach to the shore was made with great caution, and the landing was effected in safety. The three now prepared their arms, and began their tiger-like approach upon the camp. The Indian was on the lead, his two companions treading in his footsteps, with a stealthy cautiousness of manner, that rendered their progress almost literally noiseless. Occasionally a dried twig snapped under the heavy weight of the gigantic Hurry, or the blundering clumsiness of the old man; but had the Indian walked on air his step could not have seemed lighter. The great object was first to discover the position of the fire, which was known to be the centre of the whole position. At length, the keen eye of Chingachgook caught a glimpse of this important guide. It was glimmering at a distance among the trunks of trees. There was no blaze, but merely a single smouldering brand, as suited the hour; the savages usually retiring and rising with the revolutions of the sun.

As soon as a view was obtained of this beacon, the progress of the adventurers be-

came swifter and more certain. In a few minutes they got to the edge of the circle of little huts. Here they stopped to survey the ground, and to concert their movements. The darkness was so deep, as to render it difficult to distinguish any thing but the glowing brand, the trunks of the nearest trees, and the endless canopy of leaves that veiled the clouded heaven. It was ascertained, however, that a hut was quite near, and Chingachgook attempted to reconnoitre its interior. The manner in which the Indian approached the place that was supposed to contain enemies, resembled the wily advances of the cat on the bird. As he drew near, he stooped to his hands and knees, for the entrance was so low as to require this attitude, even as a convenience. Before trusting his head inside, however, he listened long to catch the breathing of sleepers. No sound was audible, and this human Serpent thrust his head in at the door, or opening, as another serpent would have peered in on the nest. Nothing rewarded the hazardous experiment; for, after feeling cautiously with a hand, the place was found to be empty.

The Delaware proceeded in the same guarded manner to one or two more of the huts, find-

ing all in the same situation. He then returned to his companions, and informed them that the Hurons had deserted their camp. A little further inquiry corroborated this fact, and it only remained to return to the canoe. The different manner in which the adventurers bore the disappointment, is worthy of a passing remark. The chief, who had landed solely with the hope of acquiring renown, stood stationary, leaning against a tree, waiting the pleasure of his companions. He was mortified and a little surprised, it is true; but he bore all with dignity, falling back for support on the sweeter expectations that still lay in reserve for that evening. It was true, he could not now hope to meet his mistress with the proofs of his daring and skill on his person, but he might still hope to meet her; and the warrior, who was zealous in the search, might always hope to be honoured. On the other hand, Hutter and Hurry, who had been chiefly instigated by the basest of all human motives, the thirst of gain, could scarce control their feelings. They went prowling among the huts, as if they expected to find some forgotten child or careless sleeper; and again and again did they vent their spite on the insensible huts,

several of which were actually torn to pieces and scattered about the place. Nay, they even quarrelled with each other, and fierce reproaches passed between them. It is possible some serious consequences might have occurred, had not the Delaware interfered to remind them of the danger of being so unguarded, and of the necessity of returning to the ark. This checked the dispute, and in a few minutes they were paddling suddenly back to the spot where they hoped to find that vessel.

It has been said that Judith took her place at the side of Deerslayer soon after the adventurers departed. For a short time, the girl was silent, and the hunter was ignorant which of the sisters had approached him; but he soon recognised the rich, full-spirited voice of the elder, as her feelings escaped in words.

"This is a terrible life for women, Deerslayer!" she exclaimed. "Would to Heaven I could see an end of it!"

"The life is well enough, Judith," was the answer, "being pretty much as it is used or abused. What would you wish to see in its place?"

"I should be a thousand times happier to live nearer to civilized beings—where there are

farms, and churches, and houses built, as it might be, by Christian hands; and where my sleep at night would be sweet and tranquil! A dwelling near one of the forts would be far better than this dreary place where we live!"

"Nay, Judith, I can't agree too lightly in the truth of all this. If forts are good to keep off inimies, they sometimes hold inimies of their own. I don't think 'twould be for your good, or the good of Hetty, to live near one; and if I *must* say what I think, I'm afeard you are a little too near, as it is." Deerslayer went on in his own steady, earnest manner, for the darkness concealed the tints that had coloured the cheeks of the girl almost to the brightness of crimson, while her own great efforts suppressed the sounds of the breathing that almost choked her. "As for farms, they have their uses, and there's them that like to pass their lives on 'em; but what comfort can a man look for in a clearin', that he can't find in double quantities in the forest? If air, and room, and light, are a little craved, the wind-rows and the streams will furnish 'em, or here are the lakes for such as have bigger longings in that way; but where are you to find your shades, and laughing springs, and leaping brooks, and vinerable

trees, a thousand years old, in a clearin'? You don't find *them*, but you find their disabled trunks marking the 'arth like head-stones in a grave-yard. It seems to me that the people who live in such places must be always thinkin' of their own inds, and of univarsal decay; and that, too, not of the decay that is brought about by time and natur', but the decay that follows waste and violence. Then as to churches, they are good, I suppose, else wouldn't good men uphold 'em. But they are not altogether necessary. They call 'em the temples of the Lord; but, Judith, the whole 'arth is a temple of the Lord to such as have the right minds. Neither forts nor churches make people happier of themselves. Moreover, all is contradiction in the settlements, while all is concord in the woods. Forts and churches almost always go together, and yet they're downright contradictions; churches being for peace, and forts for war. No, no—give me the strong places of the wilderness, which is the trees, and the churches, too, which are arbours raised by the hand of natur'."

"Woman is not made for scenes like these, Deerslayer; scenes of which we shall have no end, as long as this war lasts."

"If you mean women of white colour, I rather think you're not far from the truth, gal; but as for the females of the red men, such visitations are quite in character. Nothing would make Hist, now, the bargained wife of yonder Delaware, happier than to know that he is at this moment prowling around his nat'ral inimies, striving after a scalp."

"Surely, surely, Deerslayer, she cannot be a woman and not feel concern when she thinks the man she loves is in danger!"

"She doesn't think of the danger, Judith, but of the honour; and when the heart is desperately set on such feelin's, why there is little room to crowd in fear. Hist is a kind, gentle, laughing, pleasant creatur', but she loves honour as well as any Delaware gal I ever know'd. She's to meet the Sarpent an hour hence on the p'int where Hetty landed, and no doubt she has her anxiety about it, like any other woman; but she'd be all the happier did she know that her lover was at this moment waylaying a Mingo for his scalp."

"If you really believe this, Deerslayer, no wonder you lay so much stress on gifts. Certain am I, that no white girl could feel any thing but misery while she believed her be-

trothed in danger of his life! Nor do I suppose even you, unmoved and calm as you ever seem to be, could be at peace if you believed *your* Hist in danger."

"That's a different matter—'tis altogether a different matter, Judith. Wŏman is too weak and gentle to be intended to run such risks, and man *must* feel for her. Yes, I rather think that's as much red natur' as it's white. But I have no Hist, nor am I like to have; for I hold it wrong to mix colours any way, except in friendship and sarvices."

"In that you are and feel as a white man should! As for Hurry Harry I do think it would be all the same to him, whether his wife were a squaw or a governor's daughter, provided she was a little comely, and could help to keep his craving stomach full."

"You do March injustice, Judith; yes, you do. The poor fellow dotes on *you*, and when a man has ra'ally set his heart on such a creatur', it isn't a Mingo or even a Delaware gal, that'll be likely to unsettle his mind. You may laugh at such men as Hurry and I, for we're rough and unteached in the way of books and other knowledge; but we've our good p'ints as well as our bad ones. An honest

heart is not to be despised, gal, even though it be not varsed in all the niceties that please a female fancy."

"*You*, Deerslayer!—And *do* you—*can* you, for an instant, suppose I place *you* by the side of Harry March? No, no. I am not so far gone in dullness as that. No one—man or woman—could think of naming your honest heart, manly nature, and simple truth, with the boisterous selfishness, greedy avarice, and overbearing ferocity of Henry March. The very best that can be said of him is to be found in his name of Hurry Skurry, which, if it means no great harm, means no great good. Even my father, following his feelings with the other, as he is doing at this moment, well knows the difference between you. This, I *know*, for he has said as much to me in plain language."

Judith was a girl of quick sensibilities and of impetuous feelings; and being under few of the restraints that curtail the manifestations of maiden emotions among those who are educated in the habits of civilized life, she sometimes betrayed the latter with a freedom that was so purely natural, as to place it as far above the wiles of coquetry, as it was superior to its heartlessness. She had now even taken

one of the hard hands of the hunter and pressed it between both her own, with a warmth and earnestness that proved how sincere was her language. It was perhaps fortunate that she was checked by the very excess of her feelings, since the same power might have urged her on to avow *all* that her father had said—the old man not having been satisfied with making a comparison favourable to Deerslayer, as between the hunter and Hurry, but having actually in his blunt, rough way, briefly advised his daughter to cast off the latter entirely, and to think of the former as a husband. Judith would not willingly have said this to any other man, but there was so much confidence awakened by the guileless simplicity of Deerslayer, that one of her nature found it a constant temptation to overstep the bounds of habit. She went no farther, however, immediately relinquishing the hand, and falling back on a reserve that was more suited to her sex, and indeed to her natural modesty.

"Thank'ee, Judith, thank'ee, with all my heart," returned the hunter, whose humility prevented him from placing any flattering interpretation on either the conduct or the language of the girl. "Thank'ee, as much as if it was all true. Harry's sightly—yes, he's

as sightly as the tallest pine of these mountains, and the Sarpent has named him accordingly; howsever, some fancy good looks, and some fancy good conduct only. Hurry has one advantage, and it depends on himself whether he'll have the t'other or—Hark! that's your father's voice, gal, and he speaks like a man who's riled at something."

"God save us from any more of these horrible scenes!" exclaimed Judith, bending her face to her knees, and endeavouring to exclude the discordant sounds, by applying her hands to her ears. "I sometimes wish I had no father!"

This was bitterly said, and the repinings which extorted the words were bitterly felt. It is impossible to say what might next have escaped her, had not a gentle, low voice spoken at her elbow.

"Judith, I ought to have read a chapter to father and Hurry!" said the innocent but terrified speaker, "and *that* would have kept them from going again on such an errand. Do you call to them, Deerslayer, and tell them I want them, and that it will be good for them both if they'll return and hearken to my words."

"Ahs! me—poor Hetty, you little know

the cravin's for gold and revenge, if you believe they are so easily turned aside from their longin's! But this is an uncommon business, in more ways than one, Judith! I hear your father and Hurry growling like bears, and yet no noise comes from the mouth of the young chief. There's an end of secresy, and yet his whoop, which ought to ring in the mountains, accordin' to rule in such sarcumstances, is silent!"

"Justice may have alighted on him, and his death has saved the lives of the innocent."

"Not it—not it—the Sarpent is not the one to suffer; if *that* 's to be the law. Sartainly there has been no onset, and 'tis most likely that the camp's deserted, and the men are coming back disapp'inted. That accounts for the growls of Hurry and the silence of the Sarpent."

Just at this instant, a fall of a paddle was heard in the canoe, for vexation had made March reckless; and Deerslayer felt convinced that his conjecture was true. The sail being down, the ark had not drifted far, and ere many minutes, he heard Chingachgook, in a low quiet tone, directing Hutter how to steer in order to reach it. In less time than it takes

to tell the fact, the canoe touched the scow, and the adventurers entered the latter. Neither Hutter nor Hurry spoke of what had occurred; but the Delaware, in passing his friend, merely uttered the words, "fire's out;" which, if not literally true, sufficiently explained the truth to his listener.

It was now a question as to the course to be steered. A short surly conference was held, when Hutter decided that the wisest way would be to keep in motion, as the means most likely to defeat any attempt at a surprise—announcing his own and March's intention to requite themselves for the loss of sleep during their captivity, by lying down. As the air still baffled and continued light, it was finally determined to sail before it, let it come in what direction it might, so long as it did not blow the ark upon the strand. This point settled, the released prisoners helped to hoist the sail, and then they threw themselves on two of the pallets, leaving Deerslayer and his friend to look after the movements of the craft. As neither of the latter was disposed to sleep, on account of the appointment with Hist, this arrangement was acceptable to all parties. That Judith and Hetty remained up also, in

no manner impaired the agreeable features of this change.

For some time the scow rather drifted than sailed along the western shore, following a light southerly current of the air. The progress was slow, not exceeding a couple of miles in the hour, but the two men perceived that it was not only carrying them towards the point they desired to reach, but at a rate that was quite as fast as the hour yet rendered necessary. But little was said the while, even by the girls, and that little had more reference to the rescue of Hist, than to any other subject. The Indian was calm to the eye; but as minute after minute passed, his feelings became more and more excited, until they reached a state that might have satisfied the demands of even the most exacting mistress. Deerslayer kept the craft as much in the bays as was prudent, for the double purpose of sailing within the shadows of the woods, and of detecting any signs of an encampment they might pass on the shore. In this manner they had doubled one low point, and were already in the bay that was terminated north by the goal at which they aimed. The latter was still a quarter of a mile distant, when Chingachgook came silently to the side

of his friend, and pointed to a place directly ahead. A small fire was glimmering just within the verge of the bushes that lined the shore on the southern side of the point—leaving no doubt that the Indians had suddenly removed their camp to the very place, or at least to the very projection of land where Hist had given them the rendezvous!

CHAPTER VI.

"I hear thee babbling to the vale
Of sunshine and of flowers,
But unto me thou bring'st a tale
Of visionary hours."

WORDSWORTH.

THE discovery mentioned at the close of the preceding chapter, was of great moment in the eyes of Deerslayer and his friend. In the first place, there was the danger, almost the certainty, that Hutter and Hurry would make a fresh attempt on this camp, should they awake and ascertain its position. Then there was the increased risk of landing to bring off Hist; and there were the general uncertainty and additional hazards that must follow from the circumstance that their enemies had begun to change their positions. As the Delaware was aware that the hour was near when he ought to repair to the rendezvous, he no longer thought of trophies torn from his foes, and one of the first things arranged between him and

his associate, was to permit the two others to sleep on, lest they should disturb the execution of their plans by substituting some of their own. The ark moved slowly, and it would have taken fully a quarter of an hour to reach the point, at the rate at which they were going, thus affording time for a little forethought. The Indians, in the wish to conceal their fire from those who were thought to be still in the castle, had placed it so near the southern side of the point, as to render it extremely difficult to shut it in by the bushes, though Deerslayer varied the direction of the scow both to the right and to the left, in the hope of being able to effect that object.

"There's one advantage, Judith, in finding that fire so near the water," he said, while executing these little manœuvres, "since it shows the Mingos believe we are in the but, and our coming on 'em from this quarter, will be an onlooked for event. But it's lucky Harry March and your father are asleep, else we should have 'em prowling after scalps ag'in. Ha! there—the bushes are beginning to shut in the fire—and now it can't be seen at all!"

Deerslayer waited a little to make certain that he had at last gained the desired position,

when he gave the signal agreed on, and Chingachgook let go the grapnel, and lowered the sail.

The situation in which the ark now lay had its advantages and its disadvantages. The fire had been hid by sheering towards the shore, and the latter was nearer, perhaps, than was desirable. Still, the water was known to be very deep further off in the lake, and anchoring in deep water, under the circumstances in which the party was placed, was to be avoided, if possible. It was also believed no raft could be within miles; and though the trees in the darkness appeared almost to overhang the scow, it would not be easy to get off to her without using a boat. The intense darkness that prevailed so close in with the forest, too, served as an effectual screen, and so long as care was had not to make a noise, there was little or no danger of being detected. All these things Deerslayer pointed out to Judith, instructing her as to the course she was to follow in the event of an alarm; for it was thought to the last degree inexpedient to arouse the sleepers, unless it might be in the greatest emergency.

"And now, Judith, as we understand one

another, it is time the Sarpent and I had taken to the canoe," the hunter concluded. "The star has not risen yet, it's true, but it soon must, though none of us are likely to be any the wiser for it to-night, on account of the clouds. Howsever, Hist has a ready mind, and she's one of them that doesn't always need to have a thing afore her, to see it. I'll warrant you she'll not be either two minutes or two feet out of the way, unless them jealous vagabonds, the Mingos, have taken the alarm, and put her as a stool-pigeon to catch us, or have hid her away, in order to prepare her mind for a Huron instead of a Mohican husband."

"Deerslayer," interrupted the girl, earnestly; "this is a most dangerous service; why do *you* go on it, at all?"

"Anan!—Why you know, gal, we go to bring off Hist, the Sarpent's betrothed—the maid he means to marry, as soon as we get back to the tribe."

"That is all right for the Indian—but *you* do not mean to marry Hist—*you* are not betrothed, and why should *two* risk their lives and liberties, to do that which one can just as well perform?"

"Ah!—now I understand you, Judith—yes,

now I begin to take the idee. You think as Hist is the Sarpent's betrothed, as they call it, and not mine, it's altogether his affair; and as one man can paddle a canoe, he ought to be left to go after his gal alone! But you forget this is our ar'n'd here, on the lake, and it would not tell well to forget an ar'n'd just as the pinch came. Then, if love does count for so much with some people, particularly with young women, fri'ndship counts for something, too, with other some. I dares to say, the Delaware can paddle a canoe by himself, and can bring off Hist by himself, and perhaps he would like that quite as well, as to have me with him; but he couldn't sarcumvent sarcumventions, or stir up an ambushment, or fight with the savages, and get his sweetheart at the same time, as well by himself as if he had a fri'nd with him to depend on, even if that fri'nd is no better than myself. No — no — Judith, you wouldn't desart one that counted on you, at such a moment, and you can't, in reason, expect me to do it."

"I fear—I believe you are right, Deerslayer, and yet I wish you were not to go! Promise me one thing, at least, and that is, not to trust yourself among the savages, or to do anything

more than to save the girl. That will be enough for once, and with that you ought to be satisfied."

"Lord bless you! gal; one would think it was Hetty that's talking, and not the quick-witted, and wonderful Judith Hutter! But friglit makes the wise silly, and the strong weak. Yes, I've seen proofs of that, time and ag'in! Well, it's kind and soft-hearted in you, Judith, to feel this consarn for a fellow creatur', and I shall always say that you are kind and of true feelings, let them that envy your good looks, tell as many idle stories of you as they may."

"Deerslayer!" hastily said the girl, interrupting him, though nearly choked by her own emotions; "do you believe all you hear about a poor, motherless girl? Is the foul tongue of Harry Hurry to blast my life!"

"Not it, Judith—not it. I've told Hurry it wasn't manful to backbite them he couldn't win by fair means; and that even an Indian is always tender, touching a young woman's good name."

"If I had a brother, he wouldn't dare to do it!" exclaimed Judith, with eyes flashing fire. "But, finding me without any protector but an

old man, whose ears are getting to be as dull as his feelings, he has his way as he pleases!"

"Not exactly that, Judith; no, not exactly that, neither! *No* man, brother or stranger, would stand by and see as fair a gal as yourself hunted down, without saying a word in her behalf. Hurry's in 'arnest in wanting to make you his wife, and the little he does let out ag'in you, comes more from jealousy, like, than from any thing else. Smile on him when he awakes, and squeeze his hand only half as hard as you squeezed mine a bit ago, and my life on it, the poor fellow will forget every thing but your comeliness. Hot words don't always come from the heart, but oftener from the stomach, than anywhere else. Try him, Judith, when he wakes, and see the vartue of a smile."

Deerslayer laughed, in his own manner, as he concluded, and then he intimated to the patient-looking, but really impatient Chingachgook, his readiness to proceed. As the young man entered the canoe, the girl stood immoveable as stone, lost in the musings that the language and manner of the other were likely to produce. The simplicity of the hunter had completely put her at fault; for, in her narrow

sphere, Judith was an expert manager of the other sex; though in the present instance she was far more actuated by impulses, in all she had said and done, than by calculation. We shall not deny that some of Judith's reflections were bitter, though the sequel of the tale must be referred to, in order to explain how merited, or how keen were her sufferings.

Chingachgook, and his pale-face friend, set forth on their hazardous and delicate enterprise, with a coolness and method that would have done credit to men who were on their twentieth, instead of being on their first, war-path. As suited his relation to the pretty fugitive, in whose service they were engaged, the Indian took his place in the head of the canoe; while Deerslayer guided its movements in the stern. By this arrangement, the former would be the first to land, and of course, the first to meet his mistress. The latter had taken his post, without comment, but in secret influenced by the reflection that one who had so much at stake as the Indian, might not possibly guide the canoe with the same steadiness and intelligence, as another who had more command of his feelings. From the instant they left the side of the ark, the movements of the two adventurers were like the manœuvres of

highly-drilled soldiers, who, for the first time were called on to meet the enemy in the field. As yet, Chingachgook had never fired a shot in anger, and the *debût* of his companion in warfare, is known to the reader. It is true, the Indian had been hanging about his enemy's camp for a few hours, on his first arrival, and he had even once entered it, as related in the last chapter, but no consequences had followed either experiment. Now, it was certain that an important result was to be effected, or a mortifying failure was to ensue. The rescue, or the continued captivity of Hist, depended on the enterprise. In a word, it was virtually the maiden expedition of these two ambitious young forest soldiers; and while one of them set forth, impelled by sentiments that usually carry men so far, both had all their feelings of pride and manhood enlisted in their success.

Instead of steering in a direct line to the point, then distant from the ark less than a quarter of a mile, Deerslayer laid the head of his canoe diagonally towards the centre of the lake, with a view to obtain a position, from which he might approach the shore, having his enemies in his front only. The spot where Hetty had landed, and where Hist had pro-

mised to meet them, moreover, was on the upper side of the projection, rather than on the lower; and to reach it, would have required the two adventurers to double nearly the whole point, close in with the shore, had not this preliminary step been taken. So well was the necessity for this measure understood, that Chingachgook quietly paddled on, although it was adopted without consulting him, and apparently was taking him in a direction nearly opposite to that one might think he most wished to go. A few minutes sufficed, however, to carry the canoe the necessary distance, when both the young men ceased paddling as it were by instinctive consent, and the boat became stationary.

The darkness increased rather than diminished, but it was still possible, from the place where the adventurers lay, to distinguish the outlines of the mountains. In vain did the Delaware turn his head eastward, to catch a glimpse of the promised star; for, notwithstanding the clouds broke a little near the horizon, in that quarter of the heavens, the curtain continued so far drawn as effectually to conceal all behind it. In front, as was known by the formation of land above and behind it, lay the

point, at the distance of about a thousand feet. No signs of the castle could be seen, nor could any movement in that quarter of the lake reach the ear. The latter circumstance might have been equally owing to the distance, which was several miles, or to the fact that nothing was in motion. As for the ark, though scarcely farther from the canoe than the point, it lay so completely buried in the shadows of the shore, that it would not have been visible even had there been many degrees more of light than actually existed.

The adventurers now held a conference in low voices, consulting together as to the probable time. Deerslayer thought it wanted yet some minutes to the rising of the star, while the impatience of the chief caused him to fancy the night further advanced, and to believe that his betrothed was already waiting his appearance on the shore. As might have been expected, the opinion of the latter prevailed, and his friend disposed himself to steer for the place of rendezvous. The utmost skill and precaution now became necessary in the management of the canoe. The paddles were lifted, and returned to the water in a noiseless manner; and when within a hundred yards of

the beach, Chingachgook took in his, altogether laying his hand on his rifle in its stead. As they got still more within the belt of darkness that girded the woods, it was seen that they were steering too far north, and the course was altered accordingly. The canoe now seemed to move by instinct, so cautious and deliberate were all its motions. Still it continued to advance, until its bows grated on the gravel of the beach, at the precise spot where Hetty had landed, and whence her voice had issued, the previous night, as the ark was passing. There was, as usual, a narrow strand, but bushes fringed the woods, and in most places overhung the water.

Chingachgook stepped upon the beach, and cautiously examined it, for some distance, on each side of the canoe. In order to do this, he was often obliged to wade to his knees in the lake, but no Hist rewarded his search. When he returned, he found his friend also on the shore. They next conferred in whispers, the Indian apprehending that they must have mistaken the place of rendezvous. But Deerslayer thought it was probable they had mistaken the hour. While he was yet speaking, he grasped the arm of the Delaware, caused

him to turn his head in the direction of the lake, and pointed towards the summits of the eastern mountains. The clouds had broken a little, apparently behind rather than above the hills, and the evening star was glittering among the branches of a pine. This was every way a flattering omen, and the young men leaned on their rifles, listening intently for the sound of approaching footsteps. Voices they often heard, and mingled with them were the suppressed cries of children, and the low but sweet laugh of Indian women. As the native Americans are habitually cautious, and seldom break out in loud conversation, the adventurers knew by these facts, that they must be very near the encampment. It was easy to perceive that there was a fire within the woods, by the manner in which some of the upper branches of the trees were illuminated, but it was not possible, where they stood, to ascertain exactly how near it was to themselves. Once or twice, it seemed as if stragglers from around the fire, were approaching the place of rendezvous; but these sounds were either altogether illusion, or those who had drawn near, returned again without coming to the shore. A quarter of an hour was passed in this state of intense expectation and anxiety,

when Deerslayer proposed that they should circle the point in the canoe; and by getting a position close in, where the camp could be seen, reconnoitre the Indians, and thus enable themselves to form some plausible conjectures for the non-appearance of Hist. The Delaware, however, resolutely refused to quit the spot, reasonably enough offering as a reason, the disappointment of the girl, should she arrive in his absence. Deerslayer felt for his friend's concern, and offered to make the circuit of the point by himself, leaving the latter concealed in the bushes to await the occurrence of any fortunate event that might favour his views. With this understanding, then, the parties separated.

As soon as Deerslayer was at his post again, in the stern of the canoe, he left the shore with the same precautions, and in the same noiseless manner, as he had approached it. On this occasion he did not go far from the land, the bushes affording a sufficient cover, by keeping as close in as possible. Indeed, it would not have been easy to devise any means more favourable to reconnoitring round an Indian camp, than those afforded by the actual state of things. The formation of the point

permitted the place to be circled on three of its sides, and the progress of the boat was so noiseless as to remove any apprehensions from an alarm through sound. The most practised and guarded foot might stir a bunch of leaves, or snap a dried stick in the dark, but a bark canoe could be made to float over the surface of smooth water, almost with the instinctive readiness, and certainly with the noiseless movements of an aquatic bird.

Deerslayer had got nearly in a line between the camp and the ark, before he caught a glimpse of the fire. This came upon him suddenly, and a little unexpectedly, at first causing an alarm, lest he had incautiously ventured within the circle of light it cast. But, perceiving at a second glance, that he was certainly safe from detection, so long as the Indians kept near the centre of the illumination, he brought the canoe to a state of rest, in the most favourable position he could find, and commenced his observations.

We have written much, but in vain, concerning this extraordinary being, if the reader requires now to be told, that, untutored as he was in the learning of the world, and simple as he ever showed himself to be in all matters

touching the subtleties of conventional taste, he was a man of strong, native, poetical feeling. He loved the woods for their freshness, their sublime solitudes, their vastness, and the impress that they everywhere bore of the divine hand of their creator. He seldom moved through them, without pausing to dwell on some peculiar beauty that gave him pleasure, though seldom attempting to investigate the causes; and never did a day pass without his communing in spirit, and this, too, without the aid of forms or language, with the infinite source of all he saw, felt, and beheld. Thus constituted, in a moral sense, and of a steadiness that no danger could appal, or any crisis disturb, it is not surprising that the hunter felt a pleasure at looking on the scene he now beheld, that momentarily caused him to forget the object of his visit. This will more fully appear when we describe the scene.

The canoe lay in front of a natural vista, not only through the bushes that lined the shore, but of the trees also, that afforded a clear view of the camp. It was by means of this same opening that the light had been first seen from the ark. In consequence of their recent change of ground, the Indians had not yet retired to

their huts, but had been delayed by their preparations, which included lodging as well as food. A large fire had been made, as much to answer the purpose of torches as for the use of their simple cookery; and at this precise moment it was blazing high and bright, having recently received a large supply of dried brush. The effect was to illuminate the arches of the forest, and to render the whole area occupied by the camp as light as if hundreds of tapers were burning. Most of the toil had ceased, and even the hungriest child had satisfied its appetite. In a word, the time was that moment of relaxation and general indolence which is apt to succeed a hearty meal, and when the labours of the day have ended. The hunters and the fishermen had been equally successful; and food, that one great requisite of savage life, being abundant, every other care appeared to have subsided in the sense of enjoyment dependent on this all-important fact.

Deerslayer saw at a glance that many of the warriors were absent. His acquaintance Rivenoak, however, was present, being seated in the foreground of a picture that Salvator Rosa would have delighted to draw, his swarthy

features illuminated as much by pleasure as by the torch-like flame, while he showed another of the tribe one of the elephants that had caused so much sensation among his people. A boy was looking over his shoulder, in dull curiosity, completing the group. More in the back-ground eight or ten warriors lay half recumbent on the ground, or sat with their backs reclining against trees, so many types of indolent repose. Their arms were near them all, sometimes leaning against the same trees as themselves, or were lying across their bodies in careless preparation. But the group that most attracted the attention of Deerslayer was that composed of the women and children. All the females appeared to be collected together, and, almost as a matter of course, their young were near them. The former laughed and chatted in their rebuked and quiet manner, though one who knew the habits of the people might have detected that every thing was not going on in its usual train. Most of the young women seemed to be light-hearted enough; but one old hag was seated apart with a watchful soured aspect, which the hunter at once knew betokened that some duty of an unpleasant character had been assigned her by the

chiefs. What that duty was, he had no means of knowing; but he felt satisfied it must be, in some measure connected with her own sex, the aged among the women generally being chosen for such offices and no other.

As a matter of course, Deerslayer looked eagerly and anxiously for the form of Hist. She was nowhere visible, though the light penetrated to considerable distances in all directions around the fire. Once or twice he started, as he thought he recognized her laugh; but his ears were deceived by the soft melody that is so common to the Indian female voice. At length the old woman spoke loud and angrily, and then he caught a glimpse of one or two dark figures in the back-ground of trees, which turned as if obedient to the rebuke, and walked more within the circle of the light. A young warrior's form first came fairly into view; then followed two youthful females, one of whom proved to be the Delaware girl. Deerslayer now comprehended it all. Hist was watched, possibly by her young companion, certainly by the old woman. The youth was probably some suitor of either her or her companion; but even his discretion was distrusted under the influence of his admiration. The

known vicinity of those who might be supposed to be her friends, and the arrival of a strange red-man on the lake had induced more than the usual care, and the girl had not been able to slip away from those who watched her, in order to keep her appointment. Deerslayer traced her uneasiness, by her attempting once or twice to look up through the branches of the trees, as if endeavouring to get glimpses of the star she had herself named as the sign for meeting. All was vain however, and after strolling about the camp a little longer, in affected indifference, the two girls quitted their male escort, and took seats among their own sex. As soon as this was done, the old sentinel changed her place to one more agreeable to herself, a certain proof that she had hitherto been exclusively on watch.

Deerslayer now felt greatly at a loss how to proceed. He well knew that Chingachgook could never be persuaded to return to the ark, without making some desperate effort for the recovery of his mistress, and his own generous feelings well disposed him to aid in such an undertaking. He thought he saw the signs of an intention among the females to retire for the night; and should he remain, and the fire

continue to give out its light, he might discover the particular hut or arbour under which Hist reposed; a circumstance that would be of infinite use in their future proceedings. Should he remain, however, much longer where he was, there was great danger that the impatience of his friend would drive him into some act of imprudence. At each instant, indeed, he expected to see the swarthy form of the Delaware appearing in the back-ground, like the tiger prowling around the fold. Taking all things into consideration, therefore, he came to the conclusion it would be better to rejoin his friend, and endeavour to temper his impetuosity by some of his own coolness and discretion. It required but a minute or two to put this plan in execution, the canoe returning to the strand some ten or fifteen minutes after it had left it.

Contrary to his expectations, perhaps, Deerslayer found the Indian at his post, from which he had not stirred, fearful that his betrothed might arrive during his absence. A conference followed, in which Chingachgook was made acquainted with the state of things in the camp. When Hist named the point as the place of meeting, it was with the expectation

of making her escape from the old position, and of repairing to a spot that she expected to find without any occupants; but the sudden change of localities had disconcerted all her plans. A much greater degree of vigilance than had been previously required was now necessary; and the circumstance that an aged woman was on watch, also denoted some special grounds of alarm. All these considerations, and many more that will readily suggest themselves to the reader, were briefly discussed before the young men came to any decision. The occasion, however, being one that required acts instead of words, the course to be pursued was soon chosen.

Disposing of the canoe in such a manner that Hist must see it, should she come to the place of meeting previously to their return, the young men looked to their arms, and prepared to enter the wood. The whole projection into the lake contained about two acres of land; and the part that formed the point, and on which the camp was placed, did not compose a surface of more than half that size. It was principally covered with oaks, which, as is usual in the American forests, grew to a great height without throwing out a branch, and then arched in

a dense and rich foliage. Beneath, except the fringe of thick bushes along the shore, there was very little underbrush; though, in consequence of their shape, the trees were closer together than is common in regions where the axe has been freely used, resembling tall, straight, rustic columns, upholding the usual canopy of leaves. The surface of the land was tolerably even, but it had a small rise near its centre, which divided it into a northern and southern half. On the latter, the Hurons had built their fire, profiting by the formation to conceal it from their enemies, who, it will be remembered, were supposed to be in the castle, which bore northerly. A brook also came brawling down the sides of the adjacent hills, and found its way into the lake on the southern side of the point. It had cut for itself a deep passage through some of the higher portions of the ground, and, in later days, when this spot has became subjected to the uses of civilization, by its windings and shaded banks, it has become no mean accessory in contributing to the beauty of the place. This brook lay west of the encampment, and its waters found their way into the great reservoir of that region on the same side, and quite near

to the spot chosen for the fire. All these peculiarities, so far as circumstances allowed, had been noted by Deerslayer, and explained to his friend.

The reader will understand that the little rise in the ground, that lay behind the Indian encampment, greatly favoured the secret advance of the two adventurers. It prevented the light of the fire diffusing itself on the ground directly in the rear, although the land fell away towards the water, so as to leave what might be termed the left, or eastern flank of the position, unprotected by this covering. We have said "unprotected," though that is not properly the word, since the knoll behind the huts and the fire, offered a cover for those who were now stealthily approaching, rather than any protection to the Indians. Deerslayer did not break through the fringe of bushes immediately abreast of the canoe, which might have brought him too suddenly within the influence of the light, since the hillock did not extend to the water; but he followed the beach northerly until he had got nearly on the opposite side of the tongue of land, which brought him under the shelter of the low acclivity, and consequently more in the shadow.

As soon as the friends emerged from the

bushes, they stopped to reconnoitre. The fire was still blazing behind the little ridge, casting its light upward, into the tops of the trees, producing an effect that was more pleasing than advantageous. Still the glare had its uses; for, while the back-ground was in obscurity, the fore-ground was in strong light; exposing the savages and concealing their foes. Profiting by the latter circumstance, the young men advanced cautiously towards the ridge, Deerslayer in front, for he insisted on this arrangement, lest the Delaware should be led by his feelings into some indiscretion. It required but a moment to reach the foot of the little ascent, and then commenced the most critical part of the enterprise. Moving with exceeding caution, and trailing his rifle, both to keep its barrel out of view, and in readiness for service, the hunter put foot before foot, until he had got sufficiently high to over-look the summit, his own head being alone brought into the light. Chingachgook was at his side, and both paused to take another close examination of the camp. In order, however, to protect themselves against any straggler in the rear, they placed their bodies against the trunk of an oak, standing on the side next the fire.

The view that Deerslayer now obtained of the camp, was exactly the reverse of that he had perceived from the water. The dim figures which he had formerly discovered must have been on the summit of the ridge, a few feet in advance of the spot where he was now posted. The fire was still blazing brightly, and around it were seated on logs, thirteen warriors, which accounted for all whom he had seen from the canoe. They were conversing, with much earnestness among themselves, the image of the elephant passing from hand to hand. The first burst of savage wonder had abated, and the question now under discussion, was the probable existence, the history and the habits of so extraordinary an animal. We have not leisure to record the opinions of these rude men on a subject so consonant to their lives and experience; but little is hazarded in saying that they were quite as plausible, and far more ingénious, than half the conjectures that precede the demonstrations of science. However much they may have been at fault, as to their conclusions and inferences, it is certain that they discussed the questions with a zealous and most undivided attention. For the time being, all else was forgotten, and our adventurers could not have approached at a more fortunate instant.

The females were collected near each other, much as Deerslayer had last seen them, nearly in a line between the place where he now stood and the fire. The distance from the oak against which the young men leaned, and the warriors, was about thirty yards; the women may have been half that number of yards nigher. The latter, indeed, were so near as to make the utmost circumspection, as to motion and noise, indispensable. Although they conversed in their low, soft voices, it was possible, in the profound stillness of the woods, even to catch passages of the discourse; and the light-hearted laugh that escaped the girls, might occasionally have reached the canoe. Deerslayer felt the tremour that passed through the frame of his friend, when the latter first caught the sweet sounds that issued from the plump, pretty lips of Hist. He even laid a hand on the shoulder of the Indian, as a sort of admonition to command himself. As the conversation grew more earnest, each leaned forward to listen.

"The Hurons have more curious beasts than that," said one of the girls, contemptuously, for, like the men, they conversed of the elephant and his qualities. "The Delawares will think this creature wonderful, but to-morrow

no Huron tongue will talk of it. Our young men will find him if the animals dare to come near our wigwams!"

This was, in fact, addressed to Wah-ta!-Wah, though she who spoke uttered her words with an assumed diffidence and humility, that prevented her looking at the other.

"The Delawares are so far from letting such creatures come into their country," returned Hist, "that no one has even seen their images there! Their young men would frighten away the *images* as well as the *beasts*."

"The Delaware young men!—the nation is women—even the deer walk when they hear their hunters coming! Who has ever heard the name of a young Delaware warrior?"

This was said in good-humour, and with a laugh; but it was also said bitingly. That Hist so felt it, was apparent by the spirit betrayed in her answer.

"Who has ever heard the name of a young Delaware?" she repeated earnestly. "Tamenund, himself, though now as old as the pines on the hill, or as the eagles in the air, was once young; his name was heard from the great salt lake, to the sweet waters of the west. What is the family of Uncas? Where is another as

great, though the pale-faces have ploughed up its graves, and trodden on its bones? . Do the eagles fly as high, is the deer as swift, or the panther as brave? Is there no young warrior of that race? Let the Huron maidens open their eyes wider, and they may see one called Chingachgook, who is as stately as a young ash, and as tough as the hickory."

As the girl used her figurative language, and told her companions to "open their eyes, and they would see" the Delaware, Deerslayer thrust his fingers into the sides of his friend, and indulged in a fit of his hearty, benevolent laughter. The other smiled; but the language of the speaker was too flattering, and the tones of her voice too sweet for him to be led away by any accidental coincidence, however ludicrous. The speech of Hist produced a retort, and the dispute, though conducted in good-humour, and without any of the coarse violence of tone and gesture that often impairs the charms of the sex in what is called civilized life, grew warm and slightly clamorous. In the midst of this scene, the Delaware caused his friend to stoop, so as completely to conceal himself, and then he made a noise so closely resembling the little chirrup of the smallest

species of the American squirrel, that Deerslayer himself, though he had heard the imitation a hundred times, actually thought it came from one of the little animals skipping about, over his head. The sound is so familiar in the woods, that none of the Hurons paid it the least attention. Hist, however, instantly ceased talking, and sate motionless. Still she had sufficient self-command to abstain from turning her head. She had heard the signal by which her lover so often called her from the wigwam to the stolen interview, and it came over her senses and her heart, as the serenade affects the maiden in the land of song.

From that moment, Chingachgook felt certain that his presence was known. This was affecting much, and he could now hope for a bolder line of conduct on the part of his mistress than she might dare to adopt under an uncertainty of his situation. It left no doubt of her endeavouring to aid him in his effort to release her. Deerslayer arose as soon as the signal was given, and though he had never held that sweet communion which is known only to lovers, he was not slow to detect the great change that had come over the manner of the girl. She still affected to dispute, though it

was no longer with spirit and ingenuity, but what she said was uttered more as a lure to draw her antagonists on to an easy conquest, than with any hopes of succeeding herself. Once or twice, it is true, her native readiness suggested a retort, or an argument that raised a laugh, and gave her a momentary advantage; but these little sallies, the offspring of mother-wit, served the better to conceal her real feelings, and to give to the triumph of the other party a more natural air than it might have possessed without them. At length the disputants became wearied, and they rose in a body as if about to separate. It was now that Hist, for the first time, ventured to turn her face in the direction whence the signal had come. In doing this, her movements were natural, but guarded, and she stretched her arm and yawned, as if overcome with a desire to sleep. The chirrup was again heard, and the girl felt satisfied as to the position of her lover, though the strong light in which she herself was placed, and the comparative darkness in which the adventurers stood, prevented her from seeing their heads, the only portions of their forms that appeared above the ridge at all. The tree against which they were posted

had a dark shadow cast upon it by the intervention of an enormous pine that grew between it and the fire, a circumstance which alone would have rendered objects within its cloud invisible at any distance. This Deerslayer well knew, and it was one of the reasons why he had selected this particular tree.

The moment was near when it became necessary for Hist to act. She was to sleep in a small hut, or bower, that had been built near where she stood, and her companion was the aged hag already mentioned. Once within the hut, with this sleepless old woman stretched across the entrance, as was her nightly practice, the hope of escape was nearly destroyed, and she might at any moment be summoned to her bed. Luckily, at this instant, one of the warriors called to the old woman by name, and bade her bring him water to drink. There was a delicious spring on the northern side of the point, and the hag took a gourd from a branch, and summoning Hist to her side, she moved towards the summit of the ridge, intending to descend and cross the point to the natural fountain. All this was seen and understood by the adventurers, and they fell back into the obscurity, concealing their persons by trees,

until the two females had passed them. In walking, Hist was held tightly by the hand. As she moved by the tree that hid Chingachgook and his friend, the former felt for his tomahawk, with the intention to bury it in the brain of the woman. But the other saw the hazard of such a measure, since a single scream might bring all the warriors upon them, and he was averse to the act on considerations of humanity. His hand, therefore, prevented the blow. Still as the two moved past, the chirrup was repeated, and the Huron woman stopped and faced the tree whence the sounds seemed to proceed, standing, at the moment, within six feet of her enemies. She expressed her surprise that a squirrel should be in motion at so late an hour, and said it boded evil. Hist answered that she had heard the same squirrel three times within the last twenty minutes, and that she supposed it was waiting to obtain some of the crumbs left from the late supper. This explanation appeared satisfactory, and they moved towards the spring, the men following stealthily and closely. The gourd was filled, and the old woman was hurrying back, her hand still grasping the wrist of the girl, when she was suddenly seized so violently

by the throat as to cause her to release her captive, and to prevent her making any other sound than a sort of gurgling, suffocating noise. The Serpent passed his arm round the waist of his mistress and dashed through the bushes with her, on the north side of the point. Here he immediately turned along the beach, and ran towards the canoe. A more direct course could have been taken, but it might have led to a discovery of the place of embarking.

Deerslayer kept playing on the throat of the old woman like the keys of an organ, occasionally allowing her to breathe, and then compressing his fingers again nearly to strangling. The brief intervals for breath, however, were well improved, and the hag succeeded in letting out a screech or two that served to alarm the camp. The tramp of the warriors, as they sprang from the fire, was plainly audible; and, at the next moment three or four of them appeared on the top of the ridge, drawn against the back ground of light, resembling the dim shadows of the phantasmagoria. It was now quite time for the hunter to retreat. Tripping up the heels of his captive, and giving her throat a parting squeeze, quite as much in resentment at her

indomitable efforts to sound the alarm as from any policy, he left her on her back, and moved towards the bushes; his rifle at a poise, and his head over his shoulders, like a lion at bay.

CHAPTER VII.

"There, ye wise saints, behold your light, your star,
Ye *would* be dupes and victims, and ye *are*.
Is it enough? or must I, while a thrill
Lives in your sapient bosoms, cheat you still."

MOORE.

THE fire, the canoe, and the spring near which Deerslayer commenced his retreat, would have stood in the angles of a triangle of tolerably equal sides. The distance from the fire to the boat was a little less than the distance from the fire to the spring, while the distance from the spring to the boat was about equal to that between the two points first named. This, however, was in straight lines—a means of escape to which the fugitives could not resort. They were obliged to have recourse to a *détour* in order to get the cover of the bushes, and to follow the curvature of the beach. Under these disadvantages, then, the hunter commenced his retreat—disadvantages that he felt to be so much the greater, from his knowledge of the

habits of all Indians, who rarely fail in cases of sudden alarm, more especially when in the midst of cover, immediately to throw out flankers with a view to meet their foes at all points, and if possible to turn their rear. That some such course was now adopted he believed from the tramp of feet, which not only came up the ascent, as related, but were also heard, under the faint impulse, diverging not only towards the hill in the rear, but towards the extremity of the point, in a direction opposite to that he was about to take himself. Promptitude consequently became a matter of the last importance, as the parties might meet on the strand before the fugitive could reach the canoe.

Notwithstanding the pressing nature of the emergency, Deerslayer hesitated a single instant ere he plunged into the bushes that lined the shore. His feelings had been awakened by the whole scene, and a sternness of purpose had come over him to which he was ordinarily a stranger. Four dark figures loomed on the ridge, drawn against the brightness of the fire, and an enemy might have been sacrificed at a glance. The Indians had paused to gaze into the gloom in search of the screeching hag; and

with many a man less given to reflection than that of the hunter, the death of one of them would have been certain. Luckily, he was more prudent. Although the rifle dropped a little towards the foremost of his pursuers he did not aim or fire, but disappeared in the cover. To gain the beach, and to follow it round to the place where Chingachgook was already in the canoe, with Hist, anxiously waiting his appearance, occupied but a moment. Laying his rifle in the bottom of the canoe, Deerslayer stooped to give the latter a vigorous shove from the shore, when a powerful Indian leaped through the bushes, alighting like a panther on his back. Every thing was now suspended by a hair; a false step ruining all. With a generosity that would have rendered a Roman illustrious throughout all time—but which, in the career of one so simple and humble, would have been for ever lost to the world, but for this unpretending legend, Deerslayer threw all his force into a desperate effort, shoved the canoe off with a power that sent it a hundred feet from the shore, as it might be, in an instant, and fell forward into the lake himself, face downward; his assailant necessarily following him.

Although the water was deep within a few yards of the beach, it was not more than breast-high, as close in as the spot where the two combatants fell. Still this was quite sufficient to destroy one who had sunk under the great disadvantages in which Deerslayer was placed. His hands were free, however, and the savage was compelled to relinquish his hug to keep his own face above the surface. For half a minute there was a desperate struggle, like the floundering of an alligator that has just seized some powerful prey, and then both stood erect, grasping each other's arms, in order to prevent the use of the deadly knife in the darkness. What might have been the issue of this severe personal struggle cannot be known, for half-a-dozen savages came leaping into the water to the aid of their friend, and Deerslayer yielded himself a prisoner with a dignity that was as remarkable as his self-devotion.

To quit the lake and lead their new captive to the fire, occupied but another minute. So much engaged were they all with the struggle and its consequences that the canoe was unseen, though it still lay so near the shore as to render every syllable that was uttered perfectly intelligible to the Delaware and his betrothed;

and the whole party left the spot, some continuing the pursuit after Hist along the beach, though most proceeded to the light. Here Deerslayer's antagonist so far recovered his breath and his recollection, for he had been throttled nearly to strangulation, as to relate the manner in which the girl had got off. It was now too late to assail the other fugitives, for no sooner was his friend led into the bushes, than the Delaware placed his paddle into the water, and the light canoe glided noiselessly away, holding its course towards the centre of the lake until safe from shot, after which it sought the ark.

When Deerslayer reached the fire, he found himself surrounded by no less than eight grim savages, among whom was his old acquaintance Rivenoak. As soon as the latter caught a glimpse of the captive's countenance, he spoke apart to his companions, and a low but general exclamation of pleasure and surprise escaped them. They knew that the conqueror of their late friend, he who had fallen on the opposite side of the lake, was in their hands, and subject to their mercy or vengeance. There was no little admiration mingled in the ferocious looks that were thrown on the prisoner, an

admiration that was as much excited by his present composure as by his past deeds. This scene may be said to have been the commencement of the great and terrible reputation that Deerslayer, or Hawkeye, as he was afterwards called, enjoyed among all the tribes of New York and Canada; a reputation that was certainly more limited in its territorial and numerical extent, than those which are possessed in civilized life, but which was compensated for what it wanted in these particulars, perhaps, by its greater justice, and the total absence of mystification and management.

The arms of Deerslayer were not pinioned, and he was left the free use of his hands, his knife having been first removed. The only precaution that was taken to secure his person was untiring watchfulness, and a strong rope of bark that passed from ancle to ancle, not so much to prevent his walking as to place an obstacle in the way of his attempting to escape by any sudden leap. Even this extra provision against flight was not made until the captive had been brought to the light, and his character ascertained. It was, in fact, a compliment to his prowess, and he felt proud of the distinction. That he might be bound when the war-

riors slept he thought probable, but to be bound in the moment of capture, showed that he was already, and thus early, attaining a name. While the young Indians were fastening the rope, he wondered if Chingachgook would have been treated in the same manner had he too fallen into the hands of the enemy. Nor did the reputation of the young pale-face rest altogether on his success in the previous combat, or in his discriminating and cool manner of managing the late negotiation; for it had received a great accession by the occurrences of the night. Ignorant of the movements of the ark, and of the accident that had brought their fire into view, the Iroquois attributed the discovery of their new camp to the vigilance of so shrewd a foe. The manner in which he ventured upon the point, the abstraction or escape of Hist, and most of all the self-devotion of the prisoner, united to the readiness with which he had sent the canoe adrift, were so many important links in the chain of facts on which his growing fame was founded. Many of these circumstances had been seen, some had been explained, and all were understood.

While this admiration and these honours were so unreservedly bestowed on Deerslayer,

he did not escape some of the penalties of his situation. He was permitted to seat himself on the end of a log near the fire, in order to dry his clothes, his late adversary standing opposite, now holding articles of his own scanty vestments to the heat and now feeling his throat, on which the marks of his enemy's fingers were still quite visible. The rest of the warriors consulted together, near at hand, all those who had been out having returned to report that no signs of any other prowlers near the camp were to be found. In this state of things, the old woman, whose name was Shebear in plain English, approached Deerslayer, with her fists clenched and her eyes flashing fire. Hitherto she had been occupied with screaming, an employment at which she had played her part with no small degree of success, but having succeeded in effectually alarming all within reach of a pair of lungs that had been strengthened by long practice, she next turned her attention to the injuries her own person had sustained in the struggle. These were in no manner material, though they were of a nature to arouse all the fury of a woman who had long ceased to attract by means of the gentler qualities, and who was much disposed to revenge the hardships she had so long endured as the

neglected wife and mother of savages, on all who came within her power. If Deerslayer had not permanently injured her, he had temporarily caused her to suffer, and she was not a person to overlook a wrong of this nature on account of its motive.

"Skunk of the pale-faces," commenced this exasperated and semi-poetic fury, shaking her fist under the nose of the impassable hunter, "you are not even a woman. Your friends, the Delawares, are only women, and you are their sheep. Your own people will not own you, and no tribe of red *men* would have you in their wigwams; you skulk among petticoated warriors. *You* slay our brave friend who has left us?—no—his great soul scorned to fight you, and left his body rather than have the shame of slaying *you!* But the blood that you spilt when the spirit was not looking on, has not sunk into the ground. It must be buried in your groans—what music do I hear? Those are not the wailings of a red man!—no red warrior groans so much like a hog. They come from a pale-face throat—a Yengeese bosom, and sound as pleasant as girls singing.—Dog—skunk—wood-chuck—mink—hedge-hog—pig—toad—spider—Yengee—"

Here the old woman having expended her

breath and exhausted her epithets, was fain to pause a moment, though both her fists were shook in the prisoner's face, and the whole of her wrinkled countenance was filled with fierce resentment. Deerslayer looked upon these impotent attempts to arouse him, as indifferently as a gentleman in our own state of society regards the vituperative terms of a blackguard; the one party feeling that the tongue of an old woman could never injure a warrior, and the other knowing that mendacity and vulgarity can only permanently affect those who resort to their use; but he was spared any further attack at present, by the interposition of Rivenoak, who shoved aside the hag, bidding her quit the spot, and prepared to take his seat at the side of his prisoner. The old woman withdrew, but the hunter well understood that he was to be the subject of all her means of annoyance, if not of positive injury, so long as he remained in the power of his enemies; for nothing rankles so deeply as the consciousness that an attempt to irritate has been met by contempt, a feeling that is usually the most passive of any that is harboured in the human breast. Rivenoak quietly took the seat we have mentioned, and after a short pause, he

commenced a dialogue, which we translate, as usual, for the benefit of those readers who have not studied the North American languages.

"My pale-face friend is very welcome," said the Indian, with a familiar nod, and a smile so covert that it required all Deerslayer's vigilance to detect, and not a little of his philosophy to detect unmoved, "he is welcome. The Hurons keep a hot fire to dry the white man's clothes by."

"I thank you, Huron, or Mingo as I most like to call you," returned the other; "I thank you for the welcome, and I thank you for the fire. Each is good in its way, and the last is very good, when one has been in a spring as cold as the Glimmerglass. Even Huron warmth may be pleasant at such a time, to a man with a Delaware heart."

"The pale-face—but my brother has a name? So great a warrior would not have lived without a name!"

"Mingo," said the hunter, a little of the weakness of human nature exhibiting itself in the glance of his eye and the colour on his cheek, "Mingo, *your* brave called me Hawk-eye, I suppose on account of a quick and sartain aim, when he was lying with his head in

my lap, afore his spirit started for the happy hunting-grounds."

"'Tis a good name! The hawk is sure of his blow. Hawkeye is not a woman; why does he live with the Delawares?"

"I understand you, Mingo, but we look on all that as a sarcumvention of some of your subtle devils, and deny the charge. Providence placed me among the Delawares young, and 'bating what Christian usages demand of my colour and gifts, I hope to live and die in their tribe. Still, I do not mean to throw away altogether my nat*y*ve rights, and shall strive to do a pale-face's duty in red-skin society."

"Good; a Huron is a red-skin, as well as a Delaware. Hawkeye is more of a Huron than of a woman."

"I suppose you know, Mingo, your own meaning; if you don't, I make no question 'tis well known to Satan. But if you wish to get any thing out of me, speak plainer, for bargains cannot be made blindfolded or tongue-tied."

"Good; Hawkeye has not a forked tongue, and he likes to say what he thinks. He is an acquaintance of the Muskrat,"—this was a

name by which all the Indians designated Hutter,—" and he has lived in his wigwam, but he is not a friend. He wants no scalps, like a miserable Indian, but fights like a stout-hearted pale-face. The Muskrat is neither white nor red, neither a beast nor a fish. He is a water-snake; sometimes in the spring, and sometimes on the land. He looks for scalps, like an outcast. Hawkeye can go back and tell him how he has outwitted the Hurons, how he has escaped; and when his eyes are in a fog, when he can't see as far as from his cabin to the woods, then Hawkeye can open the door for the Hurons. And how will the plunder be divided? Why, Hawkeye will carry away the most, and the Hurons will take what he may choose to leave behind him. The scalps can go to Canada, for a pale-face has no satisfaction in *them.*"

" Well, well, Rivenoak, for so I hear 'em tarm you, this is plain English enough, though spoken in Iroquois. I understand all you mean now, and must say it out-devils even Mingo deviltry! No doubt, 'twould be easy enough to go back and tell the Muskrat that I had got away from you, and gain some credit too, by the expl'ite."

"Good; that is what I want the pale-face to do."

"Yes—yes—that's plain enough. I know what you want me to do, without more words. When inside the house and eating the Musk-rat's bread, and laughing and talking with his pretty darters, I might put his eyes into so thick a fog, that he couldn't even see the door, much less the land."

"Good! Hawkeye should have been born a Huron! His blood is not more than half white!"

"There you're out, Huron; yes, there you're as much out as if you mistook a wolf for a catamount. I'm white in blood, heart, natur', and gifts, though a little red-skin in feelin's and habits. But when old Hutter's eyes are well be-fogged, and his pretty darters, perhaps, in a deep sleep, and Harry Hurry, the Great Pine, as you Indians tarm him, is dreaming of any thing but mischief, and all suppose Hawk-eye is acting as a faithful sentinel, all I have to do is, to set a torch somewhere in sight for a signal, open the door, and let in the Hurons, to knock 'em all on the head."

"Surely my brother is mistaken; he *cannot*

be white! He is worthy to be a great chief among the Hurons!"

"That is true enough, I dares to say, if he could do all this. Now harkee, Huron, and for once hear a few honest words from the mouth of a plain man. I am a Christian born, and them that come of such a stock, and that listen to the words that were spoken to their fathers, and will be spoken to their children, until 'arth and all it holds perishes, can never lend themselves to such wickedness. Sarcumventions in war may be, and *are*, lawful; but sarcumventions, and deceit, and treachery, among fri'nds, are fit only for the pale-face devils. I know that there are white men enough to give you this wrong idee of our natur', but such are ontrue to their blood and gifts, and ought to be, if they are not, outcasts and vagabonds. No upright pale-face could do what you wish, and to be as plain with you as I wish to be, in my judgment, no upright Delaware either; with a Mingo it may be different."

The Huron listened to this rebuke with obvious disgust, but he had his ends in view, and was too wily to lose all chance of effecting them by a precipitate avowal of resentment. Af-

fecting to smile, he seemed to listen eagerly, and he then pondered on what he had heard.

"Does Hawkeye love the Muskrat?" he abruptly demanded; "or does he love his daughters?"

"Neither, Mingo. Old Tom is not a man to gain my love, and as for the darters, they are comely enough to gain the liking of any young man; but there's reason ag'in any very great love for either. Hetty is a good soul, but natur' has laid a heavy hand on her mind, poor thing!"

"And the Wild Rose!" exclaimed the Huron—for the fame of Judith's beauty had spread among those who could travel the wilderness as well as the highway, by means of old eagle's nests, rocks and riven trees, known to them by report and tradition, as well as among the white borderers—"And the Wild Rose, is she not sweet enough to be put in the bosom of my brother?"

Deerslayer had far too much of the innate gentleman to insinuate aught against the fair fame of one who, by nature and position, was so helpless; and as he did not choose to utter untruth, he preferred being silent. The Huron mistook the motive, and supposed that disappointed affection lay at the bottom of his

reserve. Still bent on corrupting or bribing his captive, in order to obtain possession of the treasures with which his imagination filled the castle, he persevered in his attack.

"Hawkeye is talking with a friend," he continued. "He knows that Rivenoak is a man of his word, for they have traded together, and trade opens the soul. My friend has come here, on account of a little string held by a girl, that can pull the whole body of the stoutest warrior?"

"You are nearer the truth, now, Huron, than you've been afore, since we began to talk. This is true. But one end of that string was not fast to my heart, nor did the Wild Rose hold the other."

"This is wonderful! Does my brother love in his head, and not in his heart? And can the Feeble-Mind pull so hard against so stout a warrior?"

"There it is ag'in; sometimes right and sometimes wrong! The string you mean is fast to the heart of a great Delaware; one of Mohican stock in fact, living among the Delawares since the disparsion of his own people, and of the family of Uncas—Chingachgook by name, or Great Sarpent. He has come here, led by the string, and I've followed, or rather

come afore, for I got here first, pulled by nothing stronger than fri'ndship; which is strong enough for such as are not niggardly of their feelin's, and are willing to live a little for their fellow-creatur's, as well as for themselves."

"But a string has two ends—one is fast to the mind of a Mohican, and the other—?"

"Why the other was here close to the fire, half an hour since. Wah-ta!-Wah held it in her hand, if she didn't hold it to her heart."

"I understand what you mean, my brother," returned the Indian gravely, for the first time catching a direct clue to the adventures of the evening. "The Great Serpent being strongest, pulled the hardest, and Hist was forced to leave us."

"I don't think there was much pulling about it;" answered the other, laughing always in his silent manner, with as much heartiness as if he were not a captive, and in danger of torture or death. "I don't think there was much pulling about it; no, I don't. Lord help you, Huron! he likes the gal, and the gal likes him, and it surpassed Huron sarcumventions to keep two young people apart, when there was so strong a feelin' to bring 'em together."

"And Hawkeye and Chingachgook came into our camp on this errand, only?"

"That's a question that'll answer itself, Mingo! Yes, if a question could talk, it would answer itself to your parfect satisfaction. For what else should we come? And yet, it is'nt exactly so, neither; for we didn't come into your camp at all, but only as far as that pine, there, that you see on the other side of the ridge, where we stood watching your movements and conduct, as long as we liked. When we were ready, the Sarpent gave his signal, and then all went just as it should, down to the moment when yonder vagabond leaped upon my back. Sartain; we came for that, and for no other purpose, and we got what we came for; there's no use in pretending otherwise. Hist is off with a man who's the next thing to her husband, and come what will to me, *that's* one good thing determined."

"What sign or signal told the young maiden that her lover was nigh?" asked the old Huron, with more curiosity than it was usual for him to betray.

Deerslayer laughed again, and seemed to enjoy the success of the exploit with as much glee, as if he had not been its victim.

"Your squirrels are great gadabouts, Mingo!" he cried, still laughing — "yes, they're sartainly great gadabouts! When

other folks' squirrels are at home and asleep, yourn keep in motion among the trees and chirrup and sing, in a way that even a Delaware gal can understand their music! Well, there's four-legged squirrels, and there's two-legged squirrels, and give me the last, when there's a good tight string atween two hearts. If one brings 'em together, t'other tells when to pull hardest!"

The Huron looked vexed, though he succeeded in suppressing any violent exhibition of resentment. He soon quitted his prisoners, and joining the rest of his warriors, he communicated the substance of what he had learned. As in his own case, admiration was mingled with anger at the boldness and success of their enemies. Three or four of them ascended the little acclivity and gazed at the tree where it was understood the adventurers had posted themselves, and even one descended it, and examined for foot-prints around its roots, in order to make sure that the statement was true. The result confirmed the story of the captive, and they all returned to the fire with increased wonder and respect. The messenger who had arrived with some communication from the party above, while the two adventurers

were watching the camp, was now dispatched with some answer, and doubtless bore with him the intelligence of all that had happened.

Down to this moment, the young Indian who had been seen walking in company with Hist and another female, had made no advances to any communication with Deerslayer. He had held himself aloof from his friends even, passing near the bevy of younger women who were clustering together, apart as usual, and conversed in low tones on the subject of the escape of their late companion. Perhaps it would be true to say, that these last were pleased as well as vexed at what had just occurred. Their female sympathies were with the lovers, while their pride was bound up in the success of their own tribe. It is possible, too, that the superior personal advantages of Hist rendered her dangerous to some of the younger part of the group, and they were not sorry to find she was no longer in the way of their own ascendancy. On the whole, however, the better feeling was most prevalent; for neither the wild condition in which they lived, the clannish prejudices of tribes, nor their hard fortunes as Indian women, could entirely conquer the inextinguishable

leaning of their sex to the affections. One of the girls even laughed at the disconsolate look of the swain who might fancy himself deserted. a circumstance that seemed suddenly to arouse his energies, and induced him to move towards the log, on which the prisoner was still seated, drying his clothes.

"This is Catamount!" said the Indian, striking his hand boastfully on his naked breast as he uttered the words, in a manner to show how much weight he expected them to carry.

"This is Hawkeye," quietly returned Deerslayer, adopting the name by which he knew he would be known in future among all the tribes of the Iroquois. "My sight is keen: is my brother's leap long?"

"From here to the Delaware villages. Hawkeye has stolen my wife: he must bring her back, or his scalp will hang on a pole, and dry in my wigwam."

"Hawkeye has stolen nothing, Huron. He doesn't come of a thieving breed, nor has he thieving gifts. Your wife, as you call Wahta!-Wah, will never be the wife of any red-skin of the Canadas; her mind is in the cabin of a Delaware, and her body has gone to find it.

The catamount is act*y*ve, I know; but its legs can't keep pace with a woman's wishes."

"The Serpent of the Delawares is a dog: he is a poor bull-pout, that keeps in the water; he is afraid to stand on the hard earth, like a brave Indian!"

"Well, well, Huron, that's pretty impudent, considering it's not an hour since the Sarpent stood within a hundred feet of you, and would have tried the toughness of your skin with a rifle-bullet, when I pointed you out to him, hadn't I laid the weight of a little judgment on his hand. You may take in timesome gals in the settlements, with your catamount whine; but the ears of a man can tell truth from on-truth."

"Hist laughs at him! She sees he is lame, and a poor hunter, and he has never been on a war-path. She will take a man for a husband, and not a fool."

"How do you know that, Catamount? how do you know that?" returned Deerslayer, laughing. "She has gone into the lake, you see, and maybe she prefers a trout to a mongrel cat. As for war-paths, neither the Sarpent nor I have much exper'ence, we are ready to own; but if you don't call this one, you must

tarm it, what the gals in the settlements tarm it, the high road to matrimony. Take my advice, Catamount, and s'arch for a wife among the Huron young women; you 'll never get one, with a willing mind, from among the Delawares."

Catamount's hand felt for his tomahawk, and when the fingers reached the handle, they worked convulsively, as if their owner hesitated between policy and resentment. At this critical moment, Rivenoak approached, and, by a gesture of authority, induced the young man to retire, assuming his former position, himself, on the log, at the side of Deerslayer. Here he continued silent for a little time, maintaining the grave reserve of an Indian chief.

"Hawkeye is right," the Iroquois at length began; "his sight is so strong that he can see truth in a dark night, and our eyes have been blinded. He is an owl, darkness hiding nothing from him. He ought not to strike his friends. He is right."

"I'm glad you think so, Mingo," returned the other, "for a traitor, in my judgment, is worse than a coward. I care as little for the Muskrat, as one pale-face ought to care for another; but I care too much for him, to

ambush him in the way you wished. In short, according to my idees, any sarcumventions, except open-war sarcumventions, are ag'in both law, and what we whites call 'gospel' too."

"My pale-face brother is right; he is no Indian, to forget his Manitou and his colour. The Hurons know that they have a great warrior for their prisoner, and they will treat him as one. If he is to be tortured, his torments shall be such as no common man can bear; and if he is to be treated as a friend, it will be the friendship of chiefs."

As the Huron uttered this extraordinary assurance of consideration, his eye furtively glanced at the countenance of his listener, in order to discover how he stood the compliment; though his gravity and apparent sincerity would have prevented any man but one practised in artifices, from detecting his motives. Deerslayer belonged to the class of the unsuspicious; and acquainted with the Indian notions of what constituted respect, in matters connected with the treatment of captives, he felt his blood chill at the announcement, even while he maintained an aspect so steeled, that his quick-sighted enemy could discover in it no signs of weakness.

"God has put me in your hands, Huron," the captive at length answered, "and I suppose you will act your will on me. I shall not boast of what I can do, under torment, for I've never been tried, and no man can say till he has been; but I'll do my endivours not to disgrace the people among whom I got my training. Howsever, I wish you now to bear witness, that I'm altogether of white blood, and, in a nat'ral way of white gifts, too; so, should I be overcome and forget myself, I hope you 'll lay the fault where it properly belongs; and in no manner put it on the Delawares, or their allies and friends the Mohicans. We're all created with more or less weakness, and I 'm afeard it 's a pale-face's to give in under great bodily torment, when a red-skin will sing his songs, and boast of his deeds in the very teeth of his foes!"

"We shall see. Hawkeye has a good countenance, and he is tough.—But why should he be tormented, when the Hurons love him? He is not born their enemy; and the death of one warrior will not cast a cloud between them for ever."

"So much the better, Huron; so much the better. Still I don't wish to owe any thing to

a mistake about each other's meaning. It is so much the better that you bear no malice for the loss of a warrior who fell in war; and yet it is ontrue that there is no inmity—lawful inmity I mean, atween us. So far as I have red-skin feelin's at all, I 've Delaware feelin's; and I leave you to judge for yourself, how far they are likely to be fri'ndly to the Mingos."

Deerslayer ceased, for a sort of spectre stood before him that put a sudden stop to his words, and, indeed, caused him for a moment to doubt the fidelity of his boasted vision. Hetty Hutter was standing at the side of the fire, as quietly as if she belonged to the tribe.

As the hunter and the Indian sat watching the emotions that were betrayed in each other's countenance, the girl had approached unnoticed, doubtless ascending from the beach on the southern side of the point, or that next to the spot where the ark had anchored, and had advanced to the fire with the fearlessness that belonged to her simplicity, and which was certainly justified by the treatment formerly received from the Indians. As soon as Rivenoak perceived the girl, she was recognised, and

calling to two or three of the younger warriors, the chief sent them out to reconnoitre, lest her appearance should be the forerunner of another attack. He then motioned to Hetty to draw near.

"I hope your visit is a sign that the Sarpent and Hist are in safety, Hetty," said Deerslayer, as soon as the girl had complied with the Huron's request. "I don't think you'd come ashore ag'in, on the ar'n'd that brought you here afore."

"Judith told me to come this time, Deerslayer," Hetty replied; "she paddled me ashore herself in a canoe, as soon as the Serpent had shown her Hist, and told his story. How handsome Hist is to-night, Deerslayer, and how much happier she looks than when she was with the Hurons!"

"That's natur', gal; yes, that may be set down as human natur'. She's with her betrothed, and no longer fears a Mingo husband. In my judgment, Judith, herself, would lose most of her beauty if she thought she was to bestow it all on a Mingo! Content is a great fortifier of good looks; and I'll warrant you, Hist is contented enough, now she is out of the hands of these miscreants, and with her

chosen warrior! Did you say that your sister told you to come ashore—why should Judith do that?"

"She bid me come to see you, and to try and persuade the savages to take more elephants to let you off; but I've brought the Bible with me—*that* will do more than all the elephants in father's chest!"

"And your father, good little Hetty—and Hurry; did they know of your ar'n'd?"

"Nothing. Both are asleep; and Judith and the Serpent thought it best they should not be woke, lest they might want to come again after scalps, when Hist had told them how few warriors, and how many women and children there were in the camp. Judith would give me no peace, till I had come ashore, to see what had happened to you."

"Well, that's remarkable, as consarns Judith! Why should she feel so much unsartainty about me? Ay, I see how it is, now; yes, I see into the whole matter, now. You must understand, Hetty, that your sister is oneasy lest Harry March should wake, and come blundering here into the hands of the inimy ag'in, under some idee that, being a travelling comrade, he ought help me in this

matter! Hurry is a blunderer, I will allow; but I don't think he'd risk as much for my sake, as he would for his own."

"Judith don't care for Hurry, though Hurry cares for her," replied Hetty, innocently, but quite positively.

"I've heard you say as much as that afore; yes, I've heard that from you, afore, gal; and yet it isn't true. One don't live in a tribe, not to see something of the way in which liking works in a woman's heart. Though no way given to marrying myself, I've been a looker-on among the Delawares, and this is a matter in which pale-face and red-skin gifts are all as one the same. When the feelin' begins, the young woman is thoughtful, and has no eyes or ears onless for the warrior that has taken her fancy; then follows melancholy and sighing, and such sort of actions; after which, especially if matters don't come to plain discourse, she often flies round to backbiting and fault-finding, blaming the youth for the very things she likes best in him. Some young creatur's are forward in this way of showing their love, and I'm of opinion, Judith is one of 'em. Now, I've heard her as much as deny that Hurry was good-looking; and the

young woman who could do *that*, must be far gone indeed."

"The young woman who liked Hurry would own that he is handsome. *I* think Hurry *very* handsome, Deerslayer,' and I'm sure every body must think so, that has eyes. Judith don't like Harry March, and that's the reason she finds fault with him."

"Well—well—my good little Hetty, have it your own way. If we should talk from now till winter, each would think as at present; and there's no use in words. I must believe that Judith is much wrapped up in Hurry, and that, sooner or later, she'll have him; and this, too, all the more from the manner in which she abuses him; and I dare to say, you think just the contrary. But mind what I now tell you, gal, and pretend not to know it," continued this being, who was so obtuse on a point on which men are usually quick enough to make discoveries, and so acute in matters that would baffle the observation of much the greater portion of mankind; "I see how it is, with these vagabonds. Rivenoak has left us, you see, and is talking yonder with his young men; and though too far to be *heard*, I can *see* what he is telling them. Their orders is to watch

your movements, and to find where the canoe is to meet you, to take you back to the ark, and then to seize all and what they can. I'm sorry Judith sent you, for I suppose she wants you to go back ag'in."

"All that's settled, Deerslayer," returned the girl, in a low, confidential, and meaning manner; "and you may trust me to out-wit the best Indian of them all. I know I am feeble-minded, but I've got *some* sense, and you'll see how I'll use it in getting back, when my errand is done!"

"Ahs! me, poor gal; I'm afeard all that's easier said than done. They're a venomous set of ript*y*les, and their p'ison's none the milder for the loss of Hist. Well I'm glad the Sarpent was the one to get off with the gal; for now there'll be two happy, at least; whereas, had *he* fallen into the hands of the Mingos, there'd been two miserable, and another far from feelin' as a man likes to feel."

"Now you put me in mind of a part of my errand, that I had almost forgotten, Deerslayer. Judith told me to ask you what you thought the Hurons would do with you if you couldn't be bought off, and what *she* had best do to serve you. Yes, this was the most important

part of the errand—what she had best do in order to serve you."

"That's as *you* think, Hetty; but it's no matter. Young women are apt to lay most stress on what most touches their feelin's—but no matter; have it your own way, so you be but careful not to let the vagabonds get the mastery of a canoe. When you get back to the ark, tell 'em to keep close, and to keep moving too, most especially at night. Many hours can't go by without the troops on the river hearing of this party, and then your fri'nds may look for relief. 'Tis but a day's march from the nearest garrison, and true soldiers will never lie idle with the foe in their neighbourhood. This is my advice, and you may say to your father and Hurry that scalp-hunting will be a poor business now, as the Mingoes are up and awake, and nothing can save 'em 'till the troops come, except keeping a good belt of water atween 'em and the savages."

"What shall I tell Judith about you, Deerslayer? I know she will send me back again, if I don't bring her the truth about *you*."

"Then tell her the *truth*. I see no reason Judith Hutter, shouldn't hear the *truth* about

me as well as a *lie*. I'm a capty*v*e in Indian hands, and Providence only knows what will come of it! Hark'ee, Hetty—" dropping his voice and speaking still more confidentially, "you *are* a little weak-minded, it must be allowed, but you know something of Indians. Here I am in their hands, after having slain one of their stoutest warriors, and they've been endivouring to work upon me, through fear of consequences, to betray your father and all in the ark. I understand the blackguards as well as if they'd told it all out plainly with their tongues. They hold up avarice afore me on one side, and fear on t'other, and think honesty will give way atween 'em both. But let your father and Hurry know 'tis useless; as the Sarpent, *he* knows it already."

"But what shall I tell *Judith?*—She will certainly send me back if I don't satisfy her mind."

"Well, tell Judith the same. No doubt the savages will try the torments to make me give in and to revenge the loss of their warrior, but I must hold out ag'in nat'ral weakness in the best manner I can. You may tell Judith to feel no consarn on my account—it will come hard I know, seeing that a white man's gifts

don't run to boasting and singing under torment, for he generally feels smallest when he suffers most—but you may tell her not to have any consarn. I think I shall make out to stand it; and she may rely on this, let me give in as much as I may, and prove completely that I am white, by wailings, and howlings, and even tears, yet I'll never fall so far as to betray my fri'nds. When it gets to burning holes in the flesh with heated ramrods, and to hacking the body, and tearing the hair out by the roots, natur' may get the upper hand, so far as groans and complaints are consarned, but there the triumph of the vagabonds will end; nothing short of God's abandoning him to the devils, can make an honest man ontrue to his colour and duty."

Hetty listened with great attention, and her mild but speaking countenance manifested a strong sympathy in the anticipated agony of the supposititious sufferer. At first she seemed at a loss how to act; then, taking a hand of Deerslayer's, she affectionately recommended to him to borrow her Bible, and to read in it while the savages were inflicting their torments. When the other honestly admitted that it exceeded his power to read, she even volunteered

to remain with him, and to perform this holy office in person. The offer was gently declined, and Rivenoak being about to join them, Deerslayer requested the girl to leave him, first enjoining her again to tell those in the ark to have full confidence in his fidelity. Hetty now walked away, and approached the group of females with as much confidence and self-possession as if she were a native of the tribe. On the other hand, the Huron resumed his seat by the side of his prisoner, the one continuing to ask questions with all the wily ingenuity of a practised Indian counsellor, and the other baffling him by the very means that are known to be the most efficacious in defeating the finesse of the more pretending diplomacy of civilization, or by confining his answers to the truth, and the truth only.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Thus died she; never more on her
Shall sorrow light, or shame. She was not made
Through years or moons the inner weight to bear,
Which colder hearts endure till they are laid
By age in earth; her days and pleasure were
Brief but delightful—such as had not stayed
Long with her destiny; but she sleeps well
By the sea-shore whereon she loved to dwell."

BYRON.

THE young men who had been sent out to reconnoitre, on the sudden appearance of Hetty soon returned to report their want of success in making any discovery. One of them had even been along the beach as far as the spot opposite to the ark, but the darkness had completely concealed that vessel from his notice. Others had examined in different directions, and everywhere the stillness of night was added to the silence and solitude of the woods.

It was consequently believed that the girl had come alone, as on her former visit, and on some similar errand. The Iroquois were igno-

rant that the ark had left the castle, and there were movements projected, if not in the course of actual execution, by this time, which also greatly added to the sense of security. A watch was set, therefore, and all but the sentinels disposed themselves to sleep.

Sufficient care was had to the safe keeping of the captive, without inflicting on him any unnecessary suffering; and, as for Hetty, she was permitted to find a place among the Indian girls in the best manner she could. She did not find the friendly offices of Hist, though her character not only bestowed impunity from pain and captivity, but it procured for her a consideration and an attention that placed her, on the score of comfort, quite on a level with the wild but gentle beings around her. She was supplied with a skin, and made her own bed on a pile of boughs a little apart from the huts. Here she was soon in a profound sleep, like all around her.

There were now thirteen men in the party, and three kept watch at a time. One remained in shadow, not far from the fire, however. His duty was to guard the captive, to take care that the fire neither blazed up so as to illuminate the spot, nor yet become wholly extinguished,

and to keep an eye generally on the state of the camp. Another passed from one beach to the other, crossing the base of the point, while the third kept moving slowly around the strand on its outer extremity, to prevent a repetition of the surprise that had already taken place that night. This arrangement was far from being usual among savages, who ordinarily rely more on the secrecy of their movements, than on vigilance of this nature; but it had been called for by the peculiarity of the circumstances in which the Hurons were now placed. Their position was known to their foes, and it could not easily be changed at an hour which demanded rest. Perhaps, too, they placed most of their confidence on the knowledge of what they believed to be passing higher up the lake, and which, it was thought, would fully occupy the whole of the pale-faces, who were at liberty, with their solitary Indian ally. It was, also, probable Rivenoak was aware, that, in holding his captive, he had in his own hands the most dangerous of all his enemies.

The precision with which those accustomed to watchfulness, or lives of disturbed rest, sleep, is not the least of the phenomena of our mysterious being. The head is no sooner on the

pillow than consciousness is lost; and yet, at a necessary hour, the mind appears to arouse the body, as promptly as if it had stood sentinel the while over it. There can be no doubt that they who are thus roused, awake by the influence of thought over matter, though the mode in which this influence is exercised must remain hidden from our curiosity until it shall be explained, should that hour ever arrive, by the entire enlightenment of the soul on the subject of all human mysteries. Thus it was with Hetty Hutter. Feeble as the immaterial portion of her existence was thought to be, it was sufficiently active to cause her to open her eyes at midnight. At that hour she awoke, and leaving her bed of skin and boughs, she walked innocently and openly to the embers of the fire, stirring the latter, as the coolness of the night and the woods, in connection with an exceedingly unsophisticated bed, had a little chilled her. As the flame shot up, it lighted the swarthy countenance of the Huron on watch, whose dark eyes glistened under its light like the balls of the panther that is pursued to his den with burning brands. But Hetty felt no fear, and she approached the spot where the Indian stood. Her movements

were so natural, and so perfectly devoid of any of the stealthiness of cunning or deception, that he imagined she had merely arisen on account of the coolness of the night, a common occurrence in a bivouac, and the one of all others, perhaps, the least likely to excite suspicion. Hetty spoke to him, but he understood no English. She then gazed near a minute at the sleeping captive, and moved slowly away in a sad and melancholy manner.

The girl took no pains to conceal her movements. Any ingenious expedient of this nature, quite likely exceeded her powers; still her step was habitually light, and scarcely audible. As she took the direction of the extremity of the point, or the place where she had landed in the first adventure, and where Hist had embarked, the sentinel saw her light form gradually disappear in the gloom without uneasiness or changing his own position. He knew that others were on the look-out, and he did not believe that one who had twice come into the camp voluntarily, and had already left it openly, would take refuge in flight. In short, the conduct of the girl excited no more attention than that of any person of feeble intellect would excite in civilized society, while

her person met with more consideration and respect.

Hetty certainly had no very distinct notions of the localities, but she found her way to the beach, which she reached on the same side of the point as that on which the camp had been made. By following the margin of the water, taking a northern direction, she soon encountered the Indian who paced the strand as sentinel. This was a young warrior, and when he heard her light tread coming along the gravel, he approached swiftly, though with any thing but menace in his manner. The darkness was so intense that it was not easy to discover forms within the shadows of the woods at the distance of twenty feet, and quite impossible to distinguish persons until near enough to touch them. The young Huron manifested disappointment when he found whom he had met; for, truth to say, he was expecting his favourite, who had promised to relieve the *ennui* of a midnight watch with her presence. This man was also ignorant of English, but he was at no loss to understand why the girl should be up at that hour. Such things were usual in an Indian village and camp, where sleep is as irregular as the meals. Then poor

Hetty's known imbecility, as in most things connected with the savages, stood her friend on this occasion. Vexed at his disappointment, and impatient of the presence of one he thought an intruder the young warrior signed for the girl to move forward, holding the direction of the beach. Hetty complied; but, as she walked away, she spoke aloud in English in her usual soft tones, which the stillness of the night made audible at some little distance.

"If you took me for a Huron girl, warrior," she said, "I don't wonder you are so little pleased. I am Hetty Hutter, Thomas Hutter's daughter, and have never met any man at night, for mother always said it was wrong, and modest young women should never do it; modest young women of the pale-faces, I mean; for customs are different in different parts of the world, I know. No, no; I'm Hetty Hutter, and wouldn't meet even Harry Hurry, though he should fall down on his knees and ask me! mother said it was wrong."

By the time Hetty had said this, she reached the place where the canoes had come ashore, and, owing to the curvature of the land and the bushes, would have been completely hid from the sight of the sentinel, had it been

broad day. But another footstep had caught the lover's ear, and he was already nearly beyond the sound of the girl's silvery voice. Still Hetty, bent only on her own thoughts and purposes, continued to speak, though the gentleness of her tones prevented the sounds from penetrating far into the woods. On the water they were more widely diffused.

"Here I am, Judith," she added, "and there is no one near me. The Huron on watch has gone to meet his sweetheart, who is an Indian girl you know, and never had a Christian mother to tell her how wrong it is to meet a man at night—"

Hetty's voice was hushed by a "hist!" that came from the water, and then she caught a dim view of the canoe, which approached noiselessly, and soon grated on the shingle with its bow. The moment the weight of Hetty was felt in the light craft, the canoe withdrew, stern foremost, as if possessed of life and volition until it was a hundred yards from the shore. Then it turned, and, making a wide sweep, as much to prolong the passage as to get beyond the sound of voices, it held its way towards the ark. For several minutes nothing was uttered; but, believing herself to

be in a favourable position to confer with her sister, Judith, who alone sat in the stern, managing the canoe with a skill little short of that of a man, began a discourse which she had been burning to commence ever since they had quitted the point.

"Here we are safe, Hetty," she said, "and may talk without the fear of being overheard. You must speak low, however, for sounds are heard far on the water in a still night. I was so close to the point some of the time while you were on it, that I have heard the voices of the warriors, and I heard your shoes on the gravel of the beach, even before you spoke."

"I don't believe, Judith, the Hurons know I have left them."

"Quite likely they do not, for a lover makes a poor sentry, unless it be to watch for his sweetheart! But tell me, Hetty, did you see and speak with Deerslayer?"

"Oh, yes—there he was seated near the fire, with his legs tied, though they left his arms free, to move them as he pleased."

"Well, what did he tell you, child?" Speak quick; I am dying to know what message he sent me."

"What did he tell me? why, what do you

think, Judith; he told me that he couldn't read! Only think of that! a white man, and not know how to read his Bible even! He never could have had a mother, sister!"

"Never mind *that*, Hetty. All men can't read; though mother knew so much and taught us so much, father knows very little about books, and he can barely read the Bible you know."

"Oh! I never thought fathers *could* read much, but *mothers* ought all to read, else how can they teach their children? Depend on it, Judith, Deerslayer could never have had a mother, else he would know how to read."

"Did you tell him *I* sent you ashore, Hetty, and how much concern I feel for his misfortune?" asked the other, impatiently.

"I believe I did, Judith; but you know I am feeble-minded, and I may have forgotten. I *did* tell him you brought me ashore. And he told me a great deal that I was to say to you, which I remember well, for it made my blood run cold to hear him. He told me to say that his friends—I suppose you are one of them, sister?"

"How can you torment me thus, Hetty! Certainly, I am one of the truest friends he has on earth."

"Torment you! yes, now I remember all about it. I am glad you used that word, Judith, for it brings it all back to my mind. Well, he said he might be *tormented* by the savages, but he would try to bear it as becomes a Christian white man, and that no one need be afeard—why does Deerslayer call it afeard, when mother always taught us to say afraid?"

"Never mind, dear Hetty, never mind *that*, now," cried the other almost gasping for breath. "Did Deerslayer really tell you that he thought the savages would put him to the torture? Recollect now, well, Hetty, for this is a most awful and serious thing."

"Yes he did; and I remember it by your speaking about my tormenting you. Oh! I felt very sorry for him, and Deerslayer took all so quietly and without noise! Deerslayer is not as handsome as Harry Hurry, Judith, but he is more quiet."

"He's worth a million Hurrys! yes, he's worth all the young men who ever came upon the lake put together," said Judith, with an energy and positiveness that caused her sister to wonder. "He is *true*.—There is no lie about Deerslayer. *You*, Hetty, may not know what a merit it is in a man to have truth, but

when you get—no—I hope you will never know it. Why should one like you be ever made to learn the hard lesson to distrust and hate!"

Judith bowed her face, dark as it was, and unseen as she must have been, by any eye but that of Omniscience, between her hands, and groaned. This sudden paroxysm of feeling, however, lasted but for a moment, and she continued more calmly, still speaking frankly to her sister, whose intelligence, and whose discretion in any thing that related to herself, she did not in the least distrust. Her voice, however, was low and husky, instead of having its former clearness and animation.

"It is a hard thing to fear truth, Hetty," she said; "and yet do I more dread Deerslayer's truth; than any enemy! One cannot tamper with such truth—so much honesty—such obstinate uprightness! But we are not altogether unequal, sister—Deerslayer and I? He is not altogether my superior?"

It was not usual for Judith so far to demean herself as to appeal to Hetty's judgment. Nor did she often address her by the title of sister, a distinction that is commonly given by the junior to the senior, even where there is per-

fect equality in all other respects. As trifling departures from habitual deportment oftener strike the imagination than more important changes, Hetty perceived the circumstances, and wondered at them in her own simple way.

Her ambition was a little quickened, and the answer was as much out of the usual course of things, as the question; the poor girl attempting to refine beyond her strength.

"Superior, Judith!" she repeated with pride. "In what *can* Deerslayer be *your* superior? Are you not mother's child—and does he know how to read—and wasn't mother before any woman in all this part of the world? I should think, so far from supposing himself *your* superior, he would hardly believe himself *mine*. "You are handsome, and he is ugly——"

"No, not ugly, Hetty," interrupted Judith. "Only plain. But his honest face has a look in it, that is far better than beauty. In my eyes, Deerslayer is handsomer than Harry Hurry."

"Judith Hutter! you frighten me. Hurry is the handsomest mortal in the world—even handsomer than you are yourself; because a

man's good looks, you know, are always better than a woman's good looks."

This little innocent touch of natural taste did not please the elder sister at the moment, and she did not scruple to betray it.

"Hetty, you now speak foolishly, and had better say no more, on this subject," she answered. "Hurry is not the handsomest mortal in the world, by many; and there are officers in the garrisons—" Judith stammered at the words—"there are officers in the garrisons, near us, far comelier than he. But, why do you think me the equal of Deerslayer—speak of *that*, for I do not like to hear you show so much admiration of a man like Hurry Harry, who has neither feelings, manners, nor conscience. *You* are too good for *him*, and he ought to be told it, at once."

"*I!* Judith, how you forget! Why *I* am not beautiful, and am feeble-minded."

"You are *good*, Hetty, and that is more than can be said of Henry March. He may have a *face*, and a *body*, but he has no *heart*. But enough of this, for the present. Tell me what raises me to an equality with Deerslayer."

"To think of you asking me this, Judith!

He can't read, and you can. He don't know how to talk, but speaks worse than Hurry even;—for, sister, Harry doesn't always pronounce his words right! Did you ever notice *that?*"

"Certainly, he is as coarse in speech as in every thing else. But, I fear you flatter me, Hetty, when you think I can be justly called the equal of a man like Deerslayer. It is true, I have been better taught; in one sense am more comely; and perhaps might look higher; but then his truth—his truth—makes a fearful difference between us! Well, I will talk no more of this; and we will bethink us of the means of getting him out of the hands of the Hurons. We haye father's chest in the ark, Hetty, and might try the temptation of more elephants; though I fear such baubles will not buy the liberty of a man like Deerslayer. I am afraid father and Hurry will not be as willing to ransom Deerslayer, as Deerslayer was to ransom them!"

"Why not, Judith? Hurry and Deerslayer are friends, and friends should always help one another."

"Alas! poor Hetty, you little know mankind! Seeming friends are often more to be

dreaded than open enemies; particularly by females. But you'll have to land in the morning, and try again what can be done for Deerslayer. Tortured he *shall* not be, while Judith Hutter lives, and can find means to prevent it."

The conversation now grew desultory, and was drawn out, until the elder sister had extracted from the younger every fact that the feeble faculties of the latter permitted her to retain, and to communicate. When Judith was satisfied—though she could never be said to be satisfied, whose feelings seemed to be so interwoven with all that related to the subject, as to have excited a nearly inappeasable curiosity—but, when Judith could think of no more questions to ask, without resorting to repetition, the canoe was paddled towards the scow. The intense darkness of the night, and the deep shadows which the hills and forest cast upon the water, rendered it difficult to find the vessel, anchored, as it had been, as close to the shore as a regard to safety rendered prudent. Judith was expert in the management of a bark canoe, the lightness of which demanded skill rather than strength; and she forced her own little vessel swiftly over the water, the moment she had ended her conference with Hetty, and

had come to the determination to return. Still no ark was seen. Several times the sisters fancied they saw it, looming up in the obscurity, like a low black rock; but on each occasion it was found to be either an optical illusion, or some swell of the foliage on the shore. After a search that lasted half an hour, the girls were forced to the unwelcome conviction that the ark had departed.

Most young women would have felt the awkwardness of their situation, in a physical sense, under the circumstances in which the sisters were left, more than any apprehensions of a different nature. Not so with Judith, however; and even Hetty felt more concern about the motives that might have influenced her father and Hurry, than any fears for her own safety.

"It cannot be, Hetty," said Judith, when a thorough search had satisfied them both that no ark was to be found; "it cannot be that the Indians have rafted, or swum off and surprised our friends as they slept?"

"I don't believe that Hist and Chingachgook would sleep until they had told each other all they had to say after so long a separation—do you, sister?"

"Perhaps not, child. There was much to

keep them awake, but one Indian may have been surprised even when not asleep, especially as his thoughts may have been on other things. Still we should have heard a noise; for in a night like this, an oath of Harry Hurry's would have echoed in the eastern hills like a clap of thunder."

"Hurry *is* sinful and thoughtless about his words, Judith," Hetty meekly and sorrowfully answered.

"No—no; 'tis impossible the ark could be taken and I not hear the noise. It is not an hour since I left it, and the whole time I have been attentive to the smallest sound. And yet, it is not easy to believe a father would willingly abandon his children!"

"Perhaps father has thought us in our cabin asleep, Judith, and has moved away to go home. You know we often move the ark in the night."

"This is true, Hetty, and it must be as you suppose. There is a little more southern air than there was, and they have gone up the lake——"

Judith stopped, for, as the last word was on her tongue, the scene was suddenly lighted, though only for a single instant, by a flash.

The crack of a rifle succeeded, and then followed the roll of the echo along the eastern mountains. Almost at the same moment a piercing female cry rose in the air in a prolonged shriek. The awful stillness that succeeded was, if possible, more appalling than the fierce and sudden interruption of the deep silence of midnight. Resolute as she was both by nature and habit, Judith scarce breathed, while poor Hetty hid her face and trembled.

"That was a woman's cry, Hetty," said the former solemnly, "and it was a cry of anguish! If the ark has moved from this spot it can only have gone north with this air, and the gun and shriek came from the point. Can any thing have befallen Hist?"

"Let us go and see, Judith; she may want our assistance—for, besides herself, there are none but men in the ark."

It was not a moment for hesitation, and ere Judith had ceased speaking her paddle was in the water. The distance to the point, in a direct line, was not great, and the impulses under which the girls worked were too exciting to allow them to waste the precious moments in useless precautions. They paddled incautiously for them, but the same excitement kept

others from noting their movements. Presently a glare of light caught the eye of Judith through an opening in the bushes, and steering by it, she so directed the canoe as to keep it visible, while she got as near the land as was either prudent or necessary.

The scene that was now presented to the observation of the girls was within the woods, on the side of the declivity so often mentioned, and in plain view from the boat. Here all in the camp were collected, some six or eight carrying torches of fat-pine, which cast a strong but funereal light on all beneath the arches of the forest. With her back supported against a tree, and sustained on one side by the young sentinel whose remissness had suffered Hetty to escape, sat the female whose expected visit had produced his delinquency. By the glare of the torch that was held near her face, it was evident that she was in the agonies of death, while the blood that trickled from her bared bosom betrayed the nature of the injury she had received. The pungent, peculiar smell of gunpowder, too, was still quite perceptible in the heavy, damp night air. There could be no question that she had been shot. Judith understood it all at a glance. The streak of

light had appeared on the water a short distance from the point, and either the rifle had been discharged from a canoe hovering near the land, or it had been fired from the ark in passing. An incautious exclamation, or laugh, may have produced the assault, for it was barely possible that the aim had been assisted by any other agent than sound. As to the effect, that was soon still more apparent, the head of the victim dropping, and the body sinking in death. Then all the torches but one were extinguished—a measure of prudence; and the melancholy train that bore the body to the camp was just to be distinguished by the glimmering light that remained.

Judith sighed heavily and shuddered, as her paddle again dipped, and the canoe moved cautiously around the point. A sight had afflicted her senses, and now haunted her imagination, that was still harder to be borne, than even the untimely fate and passing agony of the deceased girl. She had seen, under the strong glare of all the torches, the erect form of Deerslayer, standing with commiseration, and as she thought, with shame, depicted on his countenance, near the dying female. He betrayed neither fear nor backwardness *himself*;

but it was apparent by the glances cast at him by the warriors, that fierce passions were struggling in *their* bosoms. All this seemed to be unheeded by the captive, but it remained impressed on the memory of Judith throughout the night.

No canoe was met hovering near the point. A stillness and darkness, as complete as if the silence of the forest had never been disturbed, or the sun had never shone on that retired region, now reigned on the point, and on the gloomy water, the slumbering woods, and even the murky sky. No more could be done, therefore, than to seek a place of safety; and this was only to be found in the centre of the lake. Paddling in silence to that spot, the canoe was suffered to drift northerly, while the girls sought such repose as their situation and feelings would permit.

CHAPTER IX.

"Stand to your arms and guard the door—all's lost
Unless that fearful bell be silenced soon.
The officer hath miss'd his path, or purpose,
Or met some unforeseen or hideous obstacle.
Anselmo, with thy company proceed
Straight to the tower; the rest remain with me."

MARINO FALIERO.

THE conjecture of Judith Hutter, concerning the manner in which the Indian girl had met her death, was accurate in the main. After sleeping several hours, her father and March awoke. This occurred a few minutes after she had left the ark to go in quest of her sister, and when of course Chingachgook and his betrothed were on board. From the Delaware, the old man learned the position of the camp, and the recent events, as well as the absence of his daughters. The latter gave him no concern; for he relied greatly on the sagacity of the eldest, and the known impunity with which the younger passed among the savages. Long familiarity with danger, too, had blunted

his sensibilities. Nor did he seem much to regret the captivity of Deerslayer; for while he knew how material his aid might be in a defence, the difference in their views on the morality of the woods, had not left much sympathy between them. He would have rejoiced to know the position of the camp before it had been alarmed by the escape of Hist, but it would be too hazardous now to venture to land; and he reluctantly relinquished for the night the ruthless designs that captivity and revenge had excited him to entertain. In this mood, Hutter took a seat in the head of the scow, where he was quickly joined by Hurry; leaving the Serpent and Hist in quiet possession of the other extremity of the vessel.

"Deerslayer has shown himself a boy in going among the savages at this hour, and letting himself fall into their hands like a deer that tumbles into a pit," growled the old man, perceiving as usual the mote in his neighbour's eyes, while he overlooked the beam in his own. "If he is left to pay for his stupidity with his own flesh, he can blame no one but himself."

"That's the way of the world, Old Tom," returned Hurry. "Every man must meet his

own debts, and answer for his own sins. I'm amazed, however, that a lad as skilful and watchful as Deerslayer should have been caught in such a trap! Didn't he know any better than to go prowling about a Huron camp at midnight, with no place to retreat to but a lake? or did he think himself a buck, that by taking to the water could throw off the scent and swim himself out of difficulty? I had a better opinion of the boy's judgment, I'll own; but we must overlook a little ignorance in a raw hand. I say, master Hutter, do you happen to know what has become of the gals—I see no signs of Judith or Hetty, though I've been through the ark, and looked into all its living creatur's?"

Hutter briefly explained the manner in which his daughters had taken to the canoe, as it had been related by the Delaware, as well as the return of Judith after landing her sister, and her second departure.

"This comes of a smooth tongue, Floating Tom," exclaimed Hurry, grating his teeth in pure resentment—"this comes of a smooth tongue, and a silly gal's inclinations—and you had best look into the matter. You and I were both prisoners."—Hurry could recall that

circumstance *now*—" you and I were both prisoners, and yet Judith never stirred an inch to do us any service! She is bewitched with this lank-looking Deerslayer; and he, and she, and you, and all of us had best look to it. I am not a man to put up with such a wrong quietly, and do say, all the parties had best look to it! Let's up kedge, old fellow, and move nearer to this point, and see how matters are getting on."

Hutter had no objections to this movement, and the ark was got under way in the usual manner, care being taken to make no noise. The wind was passing northward, and the sail soon swept the scow so far up the lake, as to render the dark outlines of the trees that clothed the point dimly visible. Floating Tom steered, and he sailed along as near the land as the depth of the water and the overhanging branches would allow. It was impossible to distinguish any thing that stood within the shadows of the shore; but the forms of the sail and of the hut were discerned by the young sentinel on the beach, who has already been mentioned. In the moment of sudden surprise, a deep Indian exclamation escaped him. In that spirit of recklessness and ferocity that

formed the essence of Hurry's character, this man dropped his rifle and fired.

The ball was sped by accident, or by that overruling Providence which decides the fates of all, and the girl fell. Then followed the scene with the torches, which has just been described.

At the precise moment when Hurry committed this act of unthinking cruelty, the canoe of Judith was within a hundred feet of the spot from which the ark had so lately moved. Her own course has been described, and it has now become our office to follow that of her father and his companions. The shriek announced the effects of the random shot of March, and it also proclaimed that the victim was a woman. Hurry himself was startled at these unlooked-for consequences; and for a moment he was sorely disturbed by conflicting sensations. At first he laughed in reckless and rude-minded exultation; and then conscience, that monitor planted in our breasts by God, and which receives its more general growth from the training bestowed in the tillage of childhood, shot a pang to his heart. For a minute, the mind of this creature, equally of civilization and barbarism, was a sort of chaos

as to feeling, not knowing what to think of its own act; and then the obstinacy and pride of one of his habits interposed to assert their usual ascendancy. He struck the butt of his rifle on the bottom of the scow with a species of defiance, and began to whistle a low air with an affectation of indifference. All this time the ark was in motion, and it was already opening the bay above the point, and was consequently quitting the land.

Hurry's companions did not view his conduct with the same indulgence as that with which he appeared disposed to regard it himself. Hutter growled out his dissatisfaction, for the act led to no advantage, while it threatened to render the warfare more vindictive than ever; and none censure motiveless departures from the right, more severely than the mercenary and unprincipled. Still he commanded himself, the captivity of Deerslayer rendering the arm of the offender of double consequence to him at that moment. Chingachgook arose, and for a single instant the ancient animosity of tribes was forgotten in a feeling of colour; but he recollected himself in season to prevent any of the fierce consequences that for a passing moment he certainly meditated. Not so with Hist. Rushing through the hut, or cabin,

the girl stood at the side of Hurry, almost as soon as his rifle touched the bottom of the scow; and with a fearlessness that did credit to her heart, she poured out her reproaches with the generous warmth of a woman.

"What for you shoot?" she said. "What Huron gal do, dat you kill him? What you t'ink Manitou *say?* What you t'ink Manitou *feel?* What Iroquois *do?* No get honour—no get camp—no get prisoner—no get battle—no get scalp—no get not'ing at all. Blood come after blood! How you feel, your wife killed? Who pity you when tear come for moder, or sister? You big as great pine—Huron gal little slender birch—why you fall on her and crush her! You t'ink Huron forget it? No; red-skin never forget! never forget friend; never forget enemy. Red man Manitou in *dat.* Why you so wicked, great pale-face?"

Hurry had never been so daunted as by this close and warm attack of the Indian girl. It is true that she had a powerful ally in his conscience; and while she spoke earnestly, it was in tones so feminine as to deprive him of any pretext for unmanly anger. The softness of her voice added to the weight of her remonstrance, by lending to the latter an air of purity and truth. Like most vulgar-minded

men, he had only regarded the Indians through the medium of their coarser and fiercer characteristics. It had never struck him that the affections are human; that even high principles —modified by habits and prejudices, but not the less elevated within their circle—can exist in the savage state; and that the warrior who is most ruthless in the field can submit to the softest and gentlest influences in the moments of domestic quiet. In a word, it was the habit of his mind to regard all Indians as beings only a slight degree removed from the wild beasts that roamed the woods, and to feel disposed to treat them accordingly, whenever interest or caprice supplied a motive, or an impulse. Still, though daunted by these reproaches, the handsome barbarian could hardly be said to be penitent. He was too much rebuked by conscience to suffer an outbreak of temper to escape him; and perhaps he felt that he had already committed an act that might justly bring his manhood in question. Instead of resenting or answering the simple, but natural appeal of Hist, he walked away like one who disdained entering into a controversy with a woman.

In the meanwhile the ark swept onward,

and by the time the scene with the torches was enacting beneath the trees, it had reached the open lake; Floating Tom causing it to sheer further from the land, with a sort of instinctive dread of retaliation. An hour now passed in gloomy silence, no one appearing disposed to break it. Hist had retired to her pallet, and Chingachgook lay sleeping in the forward part of the scow. Hutter and Hurry alone remained awake, the former at the steering oar, while the latter brooded over his own conduct with the stubbornness of one little given to a confession of his errors, and the secret goadings of the worm that never dies. This was at the moment when Judith and Hetty reached the centre of the lake, and had lain down to endeavour to sleep in their drifting canoe.

The night was calm though so much obscured by clouds. The season was not one of storms, and those which did occur in the month of June on that embedded water, though frequently violent, were always of short continuance. Nevertheless, there was the usual current of heavy, damp night air, which, passing over the summits of the trees, scarcely appeared to descend so low as the surface of the glassy lake, but kept moving a short distance

above it, saturated with the humidity that constantly arose from the woods, and apparently never proceeding far in any one direction. The currents were influenced by the formation of the hills, as a matter of course,—a circumstance that rendered even fresh breezes baffling, and which reduced the feebler efforts of the night air to be a sort of capricious and fickle sighings of the woods. Several times the head of the ark pointed east, and once it was actually turned towards the south again; but, on the whole, it worked its way north; Hutter making always a fair wind, if wind it could be called, his principal motive appearing to be a wish to keep in motion, in order to defeat any treacherous design of his enemies. He now felt some little concern about his daughters, and perhaps as much about the canoe; but, on the whole, this uncertainty did not much disturb him, as he had the reliance already mentioned on the intelligence of Judith.

It was the season of the shortest nights, and it was not long before the deep obscurity which precedes the day began to yield to the returning light. If any earthly scene could be presented to the senses of man that might soothe his passions and temper his ferocity, it

was that which grew upon the eyes of Hutter and Hurry as the hours advanced, changing night to morning. There were the usual soft tints of the sky, in which neither the gloom of darkness nor the brilliancy of the sun prevails, and under which, objects appear more unearthly, and we might add, holy, than at any other portion of the twenty-four hours. The beautiful and soothing calm of eventide has been extolled by a thousand poets, and yet it does not bring with it the far-reaching and sublime thoughts of the half-hour that precedes the rising of a summer's sun. In the one case, the panorama is gradually hid from the sight; while in the other, its objects start out from the unfolding picture, first dim and misty, then marked in, in solemn back-ground; next seen in the witchery of an *increasing*, a thing as different as possible from the *decreasing* twilight, and finally, mellow, distinct and luminous, as the rays of the great centre of light diffuse themselves in the atmosphere. The hymns of birds, too, have no novel counterpart in the retreat to the roost or the flight to the nest; and these invariably accompany the advent of the day, until the appearance of the sun itself

"Bathes in deep joy, the land and sea."

All this, however, Hutter and Hurry witnessed without experiencing any of that calm delight which the spectacle is wont to bring when the thoughts are just and the aspirations pure. They not only witnessed it, but they witnessed it under circumstances that had a tendency to increase its power and to heighten its charms. Only one solitary object became visible in the returning light, that had received its form or uses from human taste or human desires, which as often deform as beautify a landscape. This was the castle; all the rest being native and fresh from the hand of God. That singular residence, too, was in keeping with the natural objects of the view, starting out from the gloom, quaint, picturesque, and ornamental. Nevertheless, the whole was lost on the observers, who knew no feeling of poetry, had lost their sense of natural devotion in lives of obdurate and narrow selfishness, and had little other sympathy with nature than that which originated with her lowest wants.

As soon as the light was sufficiently strong to allow of a distinct view of the lake, and more particularly of its shores, Hutter turned the head of the ark directly towards the castle,

with the avowed intention of taking possession for the day, at least, as the place most favourable for meeting his daughters, and for carrying on his operations against the Indians. By this time, Chingachgook was up, and Hist was heard stirring among the furniture of the kitchen. The place for which they steered was distant only a mile, and the air was sufficiently favourable to permit it to be neared by means of the sail. At this moment, too, to render the appearances generally auspicious, the canoe of Judith was seen floating northward, in the broadest part of the lake, having actually passed the scow in the darkness, in obedience to no other power than that of the elements. Hutter got his glass, and took a long and anxious survey, to ascertain if his daughters were in the light craft or not, and a slight exclamation like that of joy escaped him, as he caught a glimpse of what he rightly conceived to be a part of Judith's dress above the top of the canoe. At the next instant, the girl arose, and was seen gazing about her, like one assuring herself of her situation. A minute later, Hetty was seen on her knees, in the other end of the canoe, repeating the prayers that had been taught her in childhood, by a misguided but repentant

mother. As Hutter laid down the glass, still drawn to its focus, the Serpent raised it to his eye, and turned it towards the canoe. It was the first time he had ever used such an instrument, and Hist understood by his "hugh!" the expression of his face, and his entire mien, that something wonderful had excited his admiration. It is well known that the American Indians, more particularly those of superior character and stations, singularly maintain their self-possession and stoicism in the midst of the flood of marvels that present themselves in their occasional visits to the abodes of civilization, and Chingachgook had imbibed enough of this impassibility to suppress any very undignified manifestation of surprise. With Hist, however, no such law was binding, and when her lover managed to bring the glass in a line with a canoe, and her eye was applied to the smaller end, the girl started back in alarm; then she clapped her hands with delight, and a laugh, the usual attendant of untutored admiration, followed. A few minutes sufficed to enable this quick-witted girl to manage the instrument for herself, and she directed it at every prominent object that struck her fancy. Finding a rest in one of the windows, she and

the Delaware first surveyed the lake, then the shores, the hills, and finally, the castle attracted their attention. After a long steady gaze at the latter, Hist took away her eye, and spoke to her lover in a low earnest manner. Chingachgook immediately placed his eye to the glass, and his look even exceeded that of his betrothed, in length and intensity. Again they spoke together confidentially, appearing to compare opinions, after which, the glass was laid aside, and the young warrior quitted the cabin to join Hutter and Hurry.

The ark was slowly but steadily advancing, and the castle was materially within half a mile, when Chingachgook joined the two white men in the stern of the scow. His manner was calm, but it was evident to the others, who were familiar with the habits of the Indians, that he had something to communicate. Hurry was generally prompt to speak, and according to custom, he took the lead on this occasion.

"Out with it, red-skin," he cried, in his usual rough manner. "Have you discovered a chip-munk in a tree, or is there a salmon-trout swimming under the bottom of the scow? You find what a pale-face can do in the way of eyes, now, Sarpent, and mustn't wonder that

they can see the lands of the Indians from afar off."

"No good to go to castle," put in Chingachgook, with emphasis, the moment the other gave him an opportunity of speaking. "Huron there."

"The devil he is! If this should turn out to be true, Floating Tom, a pretty trap we were about to pull down on our heads! Huron there!—well, this may be so; but no signs can I see of any thing near or about the old hut, but logs, water and bark—'bating two or three windows, and one door."

Hutter called for the glass, and took a careful survey of the spot, before he ventured an opinion at all; then he somewhat cavalierly expressed his dissent from that given by the Indian.

"You've got this glass wrong end foremost, Delaware," continued Hurry; "neither the old man, nor I, can see any trail in the lake."

"No trail—water make no trail," said Hist, eagerly. "Stop boat—no go too near—Huron there!"

"Ay, that's it! Stick to the same tale, and more people will believe you. I hope, Sarpent, you and your gal will agree in telling the

same story after marriage, as well as you do now. Huron, there!—whereabouts is he to be seen—in the padlock, or the chains, or the logs? There isn't a gaol in the Colony that has a more lock up look about it, than old Tom's *chientè*; and, I know something about gaols from exper'ence."

"No see moccasin," said Hist impatiently; "why no look—and see him."

"Give me the glass, Harry," interrupted Hutter, "and lower the sail. It is seldom that an Indian woman meddles, and when she does, there is generally a cause for it. There *is*, truly, a moccasin floating against one of the piles; and it may, or may not be, a sign that the castle hasn't escaped visitors in our absence. Moccasins are no rarities, however, for I wear 'em myself, and Deerslayer wears 'em, and you wear 'em, March; and, for that matter, so does Hetty, quite as often as she wears shoes; though I never yet saw Judith trust her pretty foot in a moccasin."

Hurry had lowered the sail, and by this time the ark was within two hundred yards of the castle, setting in, nearer and nearer, each moment, but at a rate too slow to excite any uneasiness. Each now took the glass in turn,

and the castle, and every thing near it, was subjected to a scrutiny still more rigid than ever. There the moccasin lay, beyond a question, floating so lightly, and preserving its form so well, that it was scarcely wet. It had caught by a piece of the rough bark of one of the piles, on the exterior of the water-palisade, that formed the dock already mentioned; which circumstance alone prevented it from drifting away before the air. There were many modes, however, of accounting for the presence of the moccasin, without supposing it to have been dropped by an enemy. It might have fallen from the platform, even while Hutter was in possession of the place, and drifted to the spot where it was now seen, remaining unnoticed until detected by the acute vision of Hist. It might have drifted from a distance, up or down the lake, and accidentally have become attached to the pile, or palisade. It might have been thrown from a window, and alighted in that particular place; or it might certainly have fallen from a scout, or an assailant, during the past night, who was obliged to abandon it to the lake, in the deep obscurity which then prevailed.

All these conjectures passed from Hutter to

Hurry; the former appearing disposed to regard the omen as a little sinister, while the latter treated it with his usual reckless disdain. As for the Indian, he was of opinion that the moccasin should be viewed as one would regard a trail in the woods, which might, or might not, equally prove to be threatening. Hist, however, had something available to propose. She declared her readiness to take a canoe, to proceed to the palisade, and bring away the moccasin, when its ornaments would show whether it came from the Canadas or not. Both the white men were disposed to accept this offer; but the Delaware interfered to prevent the risk. If such a service was to be undertaken, it best became a warrior to expose himself in its execution; and he gave his refusal to let his betrothed proceed, much in the quiet but brief manner in which an Indian husband issues his commands.

"Well then, Delaware, go yourself, if you're so tender of your squaw," put in the unceremonious Hurry. "That moccasin must be had, or Floating Tom will keep off, here, at arms-length, till the hearth cools in his cabin. It's but a little deer-skin, after all, and cut this-a-way, or that-a-way, it's not a skear-crow to

frighten true hunters from their game. What say you, Sarpent, shall you or I canoe it?"

"Let red-man go. Better eyes than pale-face—know Huron trick better, too."

"That I'll gainsay, to the hour of my death! A white man's eyes, and a white man's nose, and for that matter his sight and ears, are all better than an Indian's, when fairly tried. Time and ag'in have I put that to the proof, and what is proved is sartain. Still I suppose the poorest vagabond going, whether Delaware or Huron, can find his way to yonder hut and back ag'in; and so, Sarpent, use your paddle and welcome."

Chingachgook was already in the canoe, and he dipped the implement the other named, into the water, just as Hurry's limber tongue ceased. Wah-ta!-Wah saw the departure of her warrior, on this occasion, with the submissive silence of an Indian girl, but with most of the misgivings and apprehensions of her sex. Throughout the whole of the past night, and down to the moment when they used the glass together in the hut, Chingachgook had manifested as much manly tenderness towards his betrothed, as one of the most refined sentiments could have shown under similar circum-

stances; but now every sign of weakness was lost in an appearance of stern resolution. Although Hist timidly endeavoured to catch his eye, as the canoe left the side of the ark, the pride of a warrior would not permit him to meet her fond and anxious looks. The canoe departed, and not a wandering glance rewarded her solicitude.

Nor were the Delaware's care and gravity misplaced, under the impressions with which he proceeded on this enterprise. If the enemy had really gained possession of the building, he was obliged to put himself under the very muzzles of their rifles, as it were, and this too without the protection of any of that cover, which forms so essential an ally in Indian warfare. It is scarcely possible to conceive of a service more dangerous; and had the Serpent been fortified by the experience of ten more years, or had his friend, the Deerslayer, been present, it would never have been attempted; the advantages in no degree compensating for the risk. But the pride of an Indian chief was acted on by the rivalry of colour; and it is not unlikely that the presence of the very creature from whom his ideas of manhood prevented his receiving a single glance, over-

flowing as he was with the love she so well merited, had no small influence on his determination.

Chingachgook paddled steadily towards the palisades, keeping his eye on the different loops of the building. Each instant he expected to see the muzzle of a rifle protruded, or to hear its sharp crack; but he succeeded in reaching the piles in safety. Here he was, in a measure, protected, having the heads of the palisades between him and the hut; and the chances of any attempt on his life, while thus covered, were greatly diminished. The canoe had reached the piles with its head inclining northward, and at a short distance from the moccasin. Instead of turning to pick up the latter, the Delaware slowly made the circuit of the whole building, deliberately examining every object that should betray the presence of enemies, or the commission of violence. Not a single sign could be discovered, however, to confirm the suspicions that had been awakened. The stillness of desertion pervaded the building; not a fastening was displaced; not a window had been broken. The door looked as secure as at the hour when it was closed by Hutter, and even the gate of the dock had all

the customary fastenings. In short, the most wary and jealous eye could detect no other evidence of the visit of enemies, than that which was connected with the appearance of the floating moccasin.

The Delaware was now greatly at a loss how to proceed. At one moment, as he came round in front of the castle, he was on the point of stepping up on the platform, and of applying his eye to one of the loops, with a view of taking a direct personal inspection of the state of things within; but he hesitated. Though of little experience in such matters, himself, he had heard so much of Indian artifices through traditions, had listened with such breathless interest to the narration of the escapes of the elder warriors, and, in short, was so well schooled in the theory of his calling, that it was almost as impossible for him to make any gross blunder on such an occasion, as it was for a well-grounded scholar, who had commenced correctly, to fail in solving his problem in mathematics. Relinquishing the momentary intention to land, the chief slowly pursued his course round the palisades. As he approached the moccasin—having now nearly completed the circuit of the building—he threw the ominous

article into the canoe by a dexterous and almost imperceptible movement of his paddle. He was now ready to depart; but retreat was even more dangerous than the approach, as the eye could no longer be riveted on the loops. If there was really any one in the castle, the motive of the Delaware in reconnoitring must be understood; and it was the wisest way, however perilous it might be, to retire with an air of confidence, as if all distrust were terminated by the examination. Such, accordingly, was the course adopted by the Indian, who paddled deliberately away, taking the direction of the ark, suffering no nervous impulse to quicken the motions of his arms, or to induce him to turn even a furtive glance behind him.

No tender wife, reared in the refinements of the highest civilization, ever met a husband on his return from the field, with more of sensibility in her countenance, than Hist discovered, as she saw the Great Serpent of the Delawares step, unharmed, into the ark. Still she repressed her emotions, though the joy that sparkled in her dark eyes, and the smile that lighted her pretty mouth, spoke a language that her betrothed could understand.

"Well, Sarpent," cried Hurry, always the first to speak, "what news from the Muskrats? Did they show their teeth, as you surrounded their dwelling?"

"I no like him"—sententiously returned the Delaware. "Too still. So still, can see silence!"

"That 's downright Indian—as if any thing could make less noise than nothing! If you 've no better reason than this to give, Old Tom had better hoist his sail, and go and get his breakfast under his own roof. What has become of the moccasin?"

"Here," returned Chingachgook, holding up his prize for the general inspection.

The moccasin was examined, and Hist confidently pronounced it to be Huron, by the manner in which the porcupine's quills were arranged on its front. Hutter, and the Delaware, too, were decidedly of the same opinion. Admitting all this, however, it did not necessarily follow that its owners were in the castle. The moccasin might have drifted from a distance, or it might have fallen from the foot of some scout, who had quitted the place when his errand was accomplished. In short, it explained nothing, while it awakened so much distrust.

Under the circumstances, Hutter and Hurry were not men to be long deterred from proceeding by proofs as slight as that of the moccasin. They hoisted the sail again, and the ark was soon in motion, heading towards the castle. The wind, or air, continued light, and the movement was sufficiently slow to allow of a deliberate survey of the building as the scow approached. The same death-like silence reigned, and it was difficult to fancy that any thing possessing animal life could be in or around the place. Unlike the Serpent, whose imagination had acted through his traditions until he was ready to perceive an artificial in a natural stillness, the others saw nothing to apprehend in a tranquillity that, in truth, denoted merely the repose of inanimate objects. The accessories of the scene, too, were soothing and calm, rather than exciting. The day had not yet advanced so far as to bring the sun above the horizon, but the heavens, the atmosphere, and the woods and lake were all seen under that softened light which immediately precedes his appearance, and which, perhaps, is the most witching period of the four-and-twenty hours. It is the moment when

every thing is distinct, even the atmosphere seeming to possess a liquid lucidity, the hues appearing grey and softened, with the outlines of objects diffused, and the perspective just as moral truths, that are presented in their simplicity without the meretricious aid of ornament or glitter. In a word, it is the moment when the senses seem to recover their powers in the simplest and most accurate forms, like the mind emerging from the obscurity of doubts into the tranquillity and peace of demonstration. Most of the influence that such a scene is apt to produce on those who are properly constituted in a moral sense, was lost on Hutter and Hurry; but both the Delawares, though too much accustomed to witness the loveliness of morning-tide, to stop to analyze their feelings, were equally sensible of the beauties of the hour, though it was probably in a way unknown to themselves. It disposed the young warrior to peace; and never had he felt less longings for the glory of the combat than when he joined Hist in the cabin, the instant the scow rubbed against the side of the platform. From the indulgence of such gentle emotions, however, he was aroused by a rude summons from Hurry, who called on him to

come forth and help to take in the sail and to secure the ark.

Chingachgook obeyed; and by the time he had reached the head of the scow, Hurry was on the platform, stamping his feet, like one glad to touch what, by comparison, might be called *terra firma*, and proclaiming his indifference to the whole Huron tribe in his customary noisy, dogmatical manner. Hutter had hauled a canoe up to the head of the scow, and was already about to undo the fastenings of the gate, in order to enter within the dock. March had no other motive in landing than a senseless bravado, and having shaken the door in a manner to put its solidity to the proof, he joined Hutter in the canoe, and began to aid him in opening the gate. The reader will remember that this mode of entrance was rendered necessary by the manner in which the owner of this singular residence habitually secured it whenever it was left empty; more particularly at moments when danger was apprehended. Hutter had placed a line in the Delaware's hand on entering the canoe, intimating that the other was to fasten the ark to the platform and to lower the sail. Instead of following these directions, however, Chin-

gachgook left the sail standing, and throwing the bight of the rope over the head of a pile, he permitted the ark to drift round until it lay against the defences in a position where it could be entered only by means of a boat, or by passing along the summits of the palisades; the latter being an exploit that required some command of the feet, and which was not to be attempted in the face of a resolute enemy.

In consequence of this change in the position of the scow, which was effected before Hutter had succeeded in opening the gate of his dock, the ark and the castle lay, as sailors would express it, yard-arm and yard-arm, kept asunder some ten or twelve feet by means of the piles. As the scow pressed close against the latter, their tops formed a species of breast-work that rose to the height of a man's head, covering in a certain degree the parts of the scow that were not protected by the cabin. The Delaware surveyed this arrangement with great satisfaction, and as the canoe of Hutter passed through the gate into the dock, he thought that he might defend his position against any garrison in the castle, for a sufficient time, could he but have had the helping arm of his friend Deerslayer. As it was, he felt comparatively secure,

and no longer suffered the keen apprehensions he had lately experienced in behalf of Hist.

A single shove sent the canoe from the gate, to the trap beneath the castle. Here Hutter found all fast, neither padlock, nor chain, nor bar having been molested. The key was produced, the locks removed, the chain loosened, and the trap pushed upward. Hurry now thrust his head in at the opening; the arms followed, and the colossal legs rose without any apparent effort. At the next instant, his heavy foot was heard stamping in the passage above; that which separated the chambers of the father and daughters and into which the trap opened. He then gave a shout of triumph.

"Come on old Tom," the reckless woodsman called out from within the building—"here's your tenement safe and sound; ay, and as empty as a nut that has passed half an hour in the paws of a squirrel! The Delaware brags of being able to *see* silence; let him come here, and he may *feel* it, in the bargain."

"Any silence where you are, Hurry Harry," returned Hutter, thrusting his head in at the hole, as he uttered the last word, which instantly caused his voice to sound smothered to those without—"any silence where you are,

ought to be both seen and felt, for it's unlike any other silence."

"Come, come—old fellow; hoist yourself up, and we'll open doors and windows and let in the fresh air to brighten up matters. Few words in troublesome times, make men the best fri'nds. Your darter Judith, is what I call a misbehaving young woman, and the hold of the whole family on me is so much weakened by her late conduct, that it wouldn't take a speech as long as the ten commandments to send me off to the river, leaving you and your traps, your ark and your children, your man servants and your maid-servants, your oxen and your asses, to fight this battle with the Iroquois by yourselves. Open that window, Floating Tom, and I'll blunder through, and do the same job to the front door."

A moment of silence succeeded, and a noise like that produced by the fall of a heavy body followed. A deep execration from Hurry succeeded, and then the whole interior of the building seemed alive. The noises that now so suddenly, and we may add so unexpectedly, even to the Delaware, broke the stillness within, could not be mistaken. They resembled those that would be produced by a struggle between

tigers in a cage. Once or twice the Indian yell was given, but it seemed smothered, and as if it proceeded from exhausted or compressed throats; and, in a single instance, a deep and another shockingly revolting execration came from the throat of Hurry. It appeared as if bodies were constantly thrown upon the floor with violence, as often rising to renew the struggle. Chingachgook felt greatly at a loss what to do. He had all the arms in the ark, Hutter and Hurry having proceeded without their rifles; but there was no means of using them, or of passing them to the hands of their owners. The combatants were literally caged, rendering it almost as impossible, under the circumstances, to get out, as to get into the building. Then there was Hist to embarrass his movements, and to cripple his efforts. With a view to relieve himself from this disadvantage, he told the girl to take the remaining canoe, and to join Hutter's daughters, who were incautiously but deliberately approaching, in order to save herself, and to warn the others of their danger. But the girl positively and firmly refused to comply. At that moment, no human power, short of an exercise of superior physical force, could have induced her

to quit the ark. The exigency of the moment did not admit of delay, and the Delaware seeing no possibility of serving his friends, cut the line and by a strong shove forced the scow some twenty feet clear of the piles. Here he took the sweeps and succeeded in getting a short distance to windward, if any direction could be thus termed in so light an air, but neither the time, nor his skill at the oars, allowed this distance to be great. When he ceased rowing, the ark might have been a hundred yards from the platform, and half that distance to the southward of it, the sail being lowered. Judith and Hetty had now discovered that something was wrong, and were stationary a thousand feet farther north.

All this while the furious struggle continued within the house. In scenes like these, events thicken in less time than they can be related. From the moment when the first fall was heard within the building, to that when the Delaware ceased his awkward attempts to row, it might have been three or four minutes, but it had evidently served to weaken the combatants. The oaths and execrations of Hurry were no longer heard, and even the struggles had lost some of their force and fury; nevertheless,

they still continued with unabated perseverance. At this instant, the door flew open, and the fight was transferred to the platform, the light and the open air.

A Huron had undone the fastenings of the door, and three or four of his tribe rushed after him upon the narrow space, as if glad to escape from some terrible scene within. The body of another followed, pitched headlong through the door with terrific violence. Then March appeared, raging like a lion at bay, and for an instant freed from his numerous enemies. Hutter was already a captive and bound. There was now a pause in the struggle, which resembled a lull in a tempest. The necessity of breathing was common to all, and the combatants stood watching each other, like mastiffs that have been driven from their holds, and are waiting for a favourable opportunity of renewing them. We shall profit by this pause, to relate the manner in which the Indians had obtained possession of the castle; and this the more willingly, because it may be necessary to explain to the reader why a conflict which had been so close and fierce, should have also been so comparatively bloodless.

Rivenoak and his companion, particularly

the latter, who had appeared to be a subordinate and occupied solely with his raft, had made the closest observations in their visits to the castle; even the boy had brought away minute and valuable information. By these means, the Hurons had obtained a general idea of the manner in which the place was constructed and secured, as well as details that enabled them to act intelligently in the dark. Notwithstanding the care that Hutter had taken to drop the ark on the east side of the building when he was in the act of transferring the furniture from the former to the latter, he had been watched in a way to render the precaution useless. Scouts were on the look-out on the eastern, as well as on the western shore of the lake, and the whole proceeding had been noted. As soon as it was dark, rafts like that already described, approached from both shores to reconnoitre; and the ark had passed within fifty feet of one of them, without its being discovered; the men it held lying at their length on the logs, so as to blend themselves and their slow-moving machine with the water. When these two sets of adventurers drew near the castle, they encountered each other, and after communicating their respective observa-

tions, they unhesitatingly approached the building. As had been expected, it was found empty. The rafts were immediately sent for a reinforcement to the shore, and two of the savages remained to profit by their situation. These men succeeded in getting on the roof, and, by removing some of the bark, in entering what might be termed the garret. Here they were found by their companions. Hatchets now opened a hole through the square logs of the upper floor, through which no less than eight of the most athletic of the Indians dropped into the room beneath. Here they were left, well supplied with arms and provisions, either to stand a siege, or to make a sortie, as the case might require. The night was passed in sleep, as is usual with Indians in a state of activity. The returning day brought them a view of the approach of the ark, through the loops, the only manner in which light and air were now admitted, the windows being closed most effectually with plank, rudely fashioned to fit. As soon as it was ascertained that the two white men were about to enter by the trap, the chief who directed the proceedings of the Hurons took his measures accordingly. He removed all the arms from his own people,

even to the knives, in distrust of savage ferocity, when awakened by personal injuries, and he hid them where they could not be found without a search. Ropes of bark were then prepared, and taking their stations in the three different rooms, they all waited for the signal to fall upon their intended captives. As soon as the party had entered the building, men without replaced the bark of the roof, removed every sign of their visit, with care, and then departed for the shore. It was one of these who had dropped his moccasin, which he had not been able to find again in the dark. Had the death of the girl been known, it is probable nothing could have saved the lives of Hurry and Hutter; but that event occurred after the ambush was laid, and at a distance of several miles from the encampment near the castle. Such were the means that had been employed to produce the state of things we shall continue to describe.

CHAPTER X.

"Now all is done that man can do,
And all is done in vain!
My love! my native land, adieu,
For I must cross the main; My dear,
For I must cross the main."

SCOTTISH BALLAD.

In the last chapter we left the combatants breathing in their narrow lists. Accustomed to the rude sports of wrestling and jumping, then so common in America, more especially on the frontiers, Hurry possessed an advantage, in addition to his prodigious strength, that had rendered the struggle less unequal than it might otherwise appear to be. This alone had enabled him to hold out so long against so many enemies; for the Indian is by no means remarkable for his skill or force in athletic exercises. As yet, no one had been seriously hurt, though several of the savages had received severe falls; and he, in particular, who

had been thrown bodily upon the platform, might be said to be temporarily *hors de combat.* Some of the rest were limping; and March himself had not entirely escaped from bruises, though want of breath was the principal loss that both sides wished to repair.

Under circumstances like those in which the parties were placed, a truce, let it come from what cause it might, could not well be of long continuance. The arena was too confined, and the distrust of treachery too great to admit of this. Contrary to what might be expected in his situation, Hurry was the first to recommence hostilities. Whether this proceeded from policy, or an idea that he might gain some advantage by making a sudden and unexpected assault, or was the fruit of irritation and his undying hatred of an Indian, it is impossible to say. His onset was furious, however, and at first it carried all before it. He seized the nearest Huron by the waist, raised him entirely from the platform, and hurled him into the water, as if he had been a child. In half a minute, two more were at his side, one of whom received a grave injury by falling on the friend who had just preceded him. But four enemies remained, and, in a hand-to-hand

conflict, in which no arms were used but those which nature had furnished, Hurry believed himself fully able to cope with that number of red-skins.

"Hurrah! Old Tom," he shouted; "the rascals are taking to the lake, and I'll soon have 'em all swimming!" As these words were uttered, a violent kick in the face sent back the injured Indian, who had caught at the edge of the platform and was endeavouring to raise himself to its level, helplessly and hopelessly into the water. When the affray was over, his dark body was seen through the limpid elements of the Glimmerglass, lying with outstretched arms, extended on the bottom of the shoal on which the castle stood, clinging to the sands and weeds as if life were to be retained by this frenzied grasp of death. A blow sent into the pit of another's stomach doubled him up like a worm that had been trodden on; and but two able-bodied foes remained to be dealt with. One of these, however, was not only the largest and strongest of the Hurons, but he was also the most experienced of the warriors present, and that one whose sinews were the best strung in fights and by marches on the war-path. This man

had fully appreciated the gigantic strength of his opponent, and had carefully husbanded his own. He was also equipped in the best manner for such a conflict, standing in nothing but his breech-cloth, the model of a naked and beautiful statue of agility and strength. To grasp him required additional dexterity and unusual strength. Still Hurry did not hesitate; but the kick that had actually destroyed one fellow-creature, was no sooner given than he closed in with this formidable antagonist, endeavouring to force him into the water also. The struggle that succeeded was truly frightful. So fierce did it immediately become, and so quick and changeful were the evolutions of the athletæ, that the remaining savage had no chance for interfering, had he possessed the desire, but wonder and apprehension held him spell-bound. He was an inexperienced youth, and his blood curdled as he witnessed the fell strife of human passions, exhibited too in an unaccustomed form.

Hurry first attempted to throw his antagonist. With this view he seized him by the throat and an arm, and tripped with the quickness and force of an American borderer. The effect was frustrated by the agile movements of

the Huron, who had clothes to grasp by, and whose feet avoided the attempt with a nimbleness equal to that with which it was made. Then followed a sort of *mêlée*, if such a term can be applied to a struggle between two, in which no efforts were distinctly visible, the limbs and bodies of the combatants assuming so many attitudes and contortions as to defeat observation. This confused but fierce rally lasted less than a minute, however, when Hurry, furious at having his strength baffled by the agility and nakedness of his foe, made a desperate effort, which sent the Huron from him, hurling his body violently against the logs of the hut. The concussion was so great as momentarily to confuse the latter's faculties. The pain too extorted a deep groan; an usual concession to agony, to escape a red man in the heat of battle. Still he rushed forward again to meet his enemy, conscious that his safety rested on his resolution. Hurry now seized the other by the waist, raised him bodily from the platform, and fell with his own great weight on the body beneath. This additional shock so far stunned the sufferer, that his gigantic white opponent now had him completely at his mercy. Passing his hands round

the throat of his victim, he compressed them with the strength of a vice, fairly doubling the head of the Huron over the edge of the platform until the chin was uppermost with the infernal strength he expended. An instant sufficed to show the consequences. The eyes of the sufferer seemed to start forward, his tongue protruded, and his nostrils dilated nearly to splitting. At this instant a rope of bark, having an eye, was passed dexterously within the two arms of Hurry; the end threaded the eye, forming a noose, and his elbows were drawn together behind his back, with a power that all his gigantic strength could not resist. Reluctantly, even under such circumstances, did the exasperated borderer see his hands drawn from their deadly grasp, for all the evil passions were then in the ascendant. Almost at the same instant, a similar fastening secured his ancles, and his body was rolled to the centre of the platform as helplessly, and as cavalierly, as if it were a log of wood. His rescued antagonist, however, did not rise, for while he began again to breathe, his head still hung helplessly over the edge of the logs, and it was thought at first that his neck was dislocated. He recovered gradually

only, and it was hours before he could walk. Some fancied that neither his body, nor his mind ever totally recovered from this near approach to death.

Hurry owed his defeat and capture to the intensity with which he had concentrated all his powers on his fallen foe. While thus occupied, the two Indians he had hurled into the water mounted to the heads of the piles, along which they passed, and joined their companion on the platform. The latter had so far rallied his faculties as to have gotten the ropes, which were in readiness for use as the others appeared, and they were applied in the manner related, as Hurry lay pressing his enemy down with his whole weight, intent only on the horrible office of strangling him. Thus were the tables turned in a single moment; he who had been so near achieving a victory that would have been renowned for ages, by means of tradition, throughout all that region, lying helpless, bound, and a captive. So fearful had been the efforts of the pale-face, and so prodigious the strength he exhibited, that even as he lay, tethered like a sheep before them, they regarded him with respect, and not without dread. The helpless body of their stoutest

warrior was still stretched on the platform; and, as they cast their eyes towards the lake, in quest of the comrade that had been hurled into it so unceremoniously, and of whom they had lost sight in the confusion of the fray, they perceived his lifeless form clinging to the grass on the bottom, as already described. These several circumstances contributed to render the victory of the Hurons almost as astounding to themselves as a defeat.

Chingachgook and his betrothed, had witnessed the whole of this struggle from the ark. When the three Hurons were about to pass the cords around the arms of the prostrate Hurry, the Delaware sought his rifle; but before he could use it, the white man was bound, and the mischief was done. He might still bring down an enemy, but to obtain the scalp was impossible; and the young chief, who would so freely risk his own life to obtain such a trophy, hesitated about taking that of a foe, without such an object in view. A glance at Hist, and the recollection of what might follow, checked any transient wish for revenge. The reader has been told that Chingachgook could scarcely be said to know how to manage the oars of the ark at all, however expert he

might be in the use of the paddle. Perhaps there is no manual labour, at which men are so bungling and awkward, as in their first attempts to pull an oar, even the experienced mariner, or boatman, breaking down in his efforts to figure with the celebrated rullock of the gondolier. In short, it is temporarily an impracticable thing for a new beginner to succeed with a single oar; but, in this case, it was necessary to handle two at the same time, and those of great size. Sweeps, or large oars, however, are sooner rendered of use by the raw hand, than lighter implements, and this was the reason that the Delaware had succeeded in moving the ark as well as he did in a first trial. That trial, notwithstanding, had sufficed to produce distrust, and he was fully aware of the critical situation in which Hist and himself were now placed, should the Hurons take to the canoe that was still lying beneath the trap, and come against them. At one moment, he thought of putting Hist into the canoe in his own possession, and of taking to the eastern mountains, in the hope of reaching the Delaware villages by direct flight. But many considerations suggested themselves to put a stop to this indiscreet step. It was almost certain that scouts watched the

lake on both sides, and no canoe could possibly approach the shore without being seen from the hills. Then a trail could not be concealed from Indian eyes, and the strength of Hist was unequal to a flight sufficiently sustained to outstrip the pursuit of trained warriors. This was a part of America in which the Indians did not know the use of horses, and every thing would depend on the physical energies of the fugitives. Last, but far from being least, were the thoughts connected with the situation of Deerslayer, a friend was not to be deserted in his extremity.

Hist, in some particulars, reasoned, and even felt differently, though she arrived at the same conclusions. Her own danger disturbed her less than her concern for the two sisters, in whose behalf her womanly sympathies were now strongly enlisted. The canoe of the girls, by the time the struggle on the platform had ceased, was within three hundred yards of the castle, and here Judith ceased paddling, the evidences of strife first becoming apparent to the eyes. She and Hetty were standing erect, anxiously endeavouring to ascertain what had occurred, but unable to satisfy their doubts, from the circumstance that the build-

ing, in a great measure, concealed the scene of action.

The parties in the ark, and in the canoe, were indebted to the ferocity of Hurry's attack for their momentary security. In any ordinary case, the girls would have been immediately captured; a measure easy of execution, now the savages had a canoe, were it not for the rude check the audacity of the Hurons had received in the recent struggle. It required some little time to recover from the effects of this violent scene; and this so much the more, because the principal man of the party, in the way of personal prowess, at least, had been so great a sufferer. Still it was of the last importance that Judith and her sister should seek immediate refuge in the ark, where the defences offered a temporary shelter at least; and the first step was to devise the means of inducing them to do so. Hist showed herself in the stern of the scow, and made many gestures and signs, in vain, in order to induce the girls to make a circuit to avoid the castle, and to approach the ark from the eastward. But these signs were distrusted or misunderstood. It is probable Judith was not yet sufficiently aware of the real state of things, to put full confidence

in either party. Instead of doing as desired she rather kept more aloof; paddling slowly back to the north, or into the broadest part of the lake, where she could command the widest view, and had the fairest field for flight before her. It was at this instant that the sun appeared above the pines of the eastern range of mountain, and a light southerly breeze arose, as was usual enough, at that season and hour.

Chingachgook lost no time in hoisting the sail. Whatever might be in reserve for him, there could be no question that it was every way desirable to get the ark at such a distance from the castle, as to reduce his enemies to the necessity of approaching the former in the canoe, which the chances of war had so inopportunely for his wishes and security, thrown into their hands. The appearance of the opening duck seemed first to arouse the Hurons from their apathy; and by the time the head of the scow had fallen off before the wind, which it did unfortunately in the wrong direction, bringing it within a few yards of the platform, Hist found it necessary to warn her lover of the importance of covering his person against the rifles of his foes. This was a

danger to be avoided under all circumstances, and so much the more, because the Delaware found that Hist would not take to the cover herself so long as he remained exposed. Accordingly, Chingachgook abandoned the scow to its own movements, forced Hist into the cabin, the doors of which he immediately secured, and then he looked about him for the rifles.

The situation of the parties was now so singular as to merit a particular description. The ark was within sixty yards of the castle, a little to the southward or to windward of it, with its sail full, and the steering-oar abandoned. The latter, fortunately, was loose, so that it produced no great influence on the crab-like movement of the unwieldy craft. The sail being set, as sailors term it, flying, or having no braces, the air forced the yard forward, though both sheets were fast. The effect was threefold on a boat with a bottom that was perfectly flat, and which drew merely some three or four inches of water. It pressed the head slowly round to leeward, it forced the whole fabric bodily in the same direction at the same time, and the water that unavoidably gathered under the lee, gave the scow also a

forward movement. All these changes were exceedingly slow, however, for the wind was not only light, but it was baffling, as usual, and twice or thrice the sail shook. Once it was absolutely taken aback.

Had there been any keel to the ark, it would inevitably have run foul of the platform, bows on, when it is probable nothing could have prevented the Hurons from carrying it; more particularly as the sail would have enabled them to approach under cover. As it was, the scow wore slowly round, barely clearing that part of the building. The piles projecting several feet, *they* were not cleared, but the head of the slow-moving craft caught between two of them by one of its square corners, and hung. At this moment the Delaware was vigilantly watching through a loop for an opportunity to fire, while the Hurons kept within the building, similarly occupied. The exhausted warrior reclined against the hut, there having been no time to remove him, and Hurry lay almost as helpless as a log, tethered like a sheep on its way to the slaughter, near the middle of the platform. Chingachgook could have slain the first at any moment, but still his scalp would have been safe, and the young chief disdained to strike a

blow that could lead to neither honour nor advantage.

"Run out one of the poles, Sarpent, if Sarpent you be," said Hurry, amid the groans that the tightness of the ligatures were beginning to extort from him—"run out one of the poles, and shove the head of the scow off, and you'll drift clear of us—and when you've done that good turn for *yourself*, just finish this gagging blackguard for *me*."

The appeal of Hurry, however, had no other effect than to draw the attention of Hist to his situation. This quick-witted creature comprehended it a glance. His ancles were bound with several turns of stout, bark rope, and his arms, above the elbows, were similarly secured behind his back, barely leaving him a little play of the hands and wrists. Putting her mouth near a loop, she said in a low but distinct voice—

"Why you don't roll here, and fall in scow? Chingachgook shoot Huron if he chase!"

"By the Lord, gal, that's a judgmatical thought, and it shall be tried, if the starn of your scow will come a little nearer. Put a bed at the bottom for me to fall on."

This was said at a happy moment, for tired

of waiting, all the Indians made a rapid discharge of their rifles almost simultaneously, injuring no one, though several bullets passed through the loops. Hist had heard part of Hurry's words, but most of what he said was lost in the sharp reports of the fire-arms. She undid the bar of the door that led to the stern of the scow, but did not dare to expose her person. All this time the head of the ark hung, but by a gradually decreasing hold, as the other end swung slowly round, nearer and nearer to the platform. Hurry, who now lay with his face towards the ark, occasionally writhing and turning over like one in pain, evolutions he had performed ever since he was secured, watching every change, and at last, he saw that the whole vessel was free, and was beginning to grate slowly along the sides of the piles. The attempt was desperate, but it seemed the only chance for escaping torture and death, and it suited the reckless daring of the man's character. Waiting to the last moment, in order that the stern of the scow might fairly rub against the platform, he began to writhe again, as if in intolerable suffering, execrating all Indians in general, and the Hurons in particular, and then he suddenly and rapidly

rolled over and over, taking the direction of the stern of the scow. Unfortunately, Hurry's shoulders required more space to revolve in than his feet, and by the time he reached the edge of the platform, his direction had so far changed as to carry him clear of the ark altogether; and the rapidity of his revolutions, and the emergency admitting of no delay, he fell into the water. At this instant, Chingachgook, by an understanding with his betrothed, drew the fire of the Hurons again, not a man of whom saw the manner in which one, whom they knew to be effectually tethered, had disappeared: But Hist's feelings were strongly interested in the success of so bold a scheme, and she watched the movements of Hurry as the cat watches the mouse. The moment he was in motion, she foresaw the consequences, and this the more readily, as the scow was now beginning to move with some steadiness, and she bethought her of the means of saving him. With a sort of instinctive readiness, she opened the door at the very moment the rifles were ringing in her ears, and protected by the intervening cabin, she stepped into the stern of the scow in time to witness the fall of Hurry into the lake. Her foot was unconsciously placed

on the end of one of the sheets of the sail, which was fastened aft, and catching up all the spare rope, with the awkwardness, but also with the generous resolution of a woman, she threw it in the direction of the helpless Hurry. The line fell on the head and body of the sinking man, and he not only succeeded in grasping separate parts of it with his hands, but he actually got a portion of it between his teeth. Hurry was an expert swimmer, and tethered as he was, he resorted to the very expedient that philosophy and reflection would have suggested. He had fallen on his back, and instead of floundering and drowning himself by desperate efforts to walk on the water, he permitted his body to sink as low as possible, and was already submerged, with the exception of his face, when the line reached him. In this situation he might possibly have remained until rescued by the Hurons, using his hands as fishes use their fins, had he received no other succour; but the movement of the ark soon tightened the rope, and of course he was dragged gently ahead, holding even pace with the scow. The motion aided in keeping his face above the surface of the water, and it would have been possible for one accustomed

to endurance to have been towed a mile in this singular but simple manner.

It has been said that the Hurons did not observe the sudden disappearance of Hurry. In his present situation, he was not only hid from view by the platform, but as the ark drew slowly ahead, impelled by a sail that was now filled, he received the same friendly service from the piles. The Hurons, indeed, were too intent on endeavouring to slay their Delaware foe, by sending a bullet through some one of the loops or crevices of the cabin, to bethink them at all of one whom they fancied so thoroughly tied. Their great concern was the manner in which the ark rubbed past the piles, although its motion was lessened at least one half by the friction, and they passed into the northern end of the castle in order to catch opportunities of firing through the loops of that part of the building. Chingachgook was similarly occupied, and remained as ignorant as his enemies of the situation of Hurry. As the ark grated along, the rifles sent their little clouds of smoke from one cover to the other, but the eyes and movements of the opposing parties were too quick to permit any injury to be done. At length one side had the mortification, and the other the pleasure, of seeing the scow

swing clear of the piles altogether, when it immediately moved away, with a materially accelerated motion towards the north.

Chingachgook now first learned from Hist the critical condition of Hurry. To have exposed either of their persons in the stern of the scow, would have been certain death; but fortunately the sheet to which the man clung, led forward to the foot of the sail. The Delaware found means to unloosen it from the cleet aft; and Hist, who was already forward for that purpose, immediately began to pull upon the line. At this moment Hurry was towing fifty or sixty feet astern, with nothing but his face above water. As he was dragged out clear of the castle and the piles, he was first perceived by the Hurons, who raised a hideous yell, and commenced a fire on what may very well be termed the floating mass. It was at the same instant that Hist began to pull upon the line forward—a circumstance that probably saved Hurry's life, aided by his own self-possession and border readiness. The first bullet struck the water directly on the spot where the broad chest of the young giant was visible through the pure element, and might have pierced his heart, had the angle at which it was fired been less acute. Instead of

penetrating the lake, however, it glanced from its smooth surface, rose, and actually buried itself in the logs of the cabin, near the spot at which Chingachgook had shown himself the minute before, while clearing the line from the cleet. A second, and a third, and a fourth bullet followed, all meeting with the same resistance from the surface of the water, though Hurry sensibly felt the violence of the blows they struck upon the lake so immediately above, and so near his breast. Discovering their mistake, the Hurons now changed their plan, and aimed at the uncovered face; but by this time, Hist was pulling on the line, the target advanced, and the deadly missiles still fell upon the water. In another moment the body was dragged past the end of the scow, and became concealed. As for the Delaware and Hist, they worked perfectly covered by the cabin, and in less time than it requires to tell it, they had hauled the huge frame of Hurry to the place they occupied. Chingachgook stood in readiness with his keen knife, and bending over the side of the scow, he soon severed the bark that bound the limbs of the borderer. To raise him high enough to reach the edge of the boat, and to aid him in entering, were less easy tasks, as

Hurry's arms were still nearly useless; but both were done in time, when the liberated man staggered forward and fell, exhausted and helpless, into the bottom of the scow. Here we shall leave him to recover his strength and the due circulation of his blood, while we proceed with the narrative of events that crowd upon us too fast to admit of any postponement.

The moment the Hurons lost sight of the body of Hurry, they gave a common yell of disappointment, and three of the most active of their number ran to the trap, and entered the canoe. It required some little delay, however, to embark with their weapons, to find the paddles, and, if we may use a phrase so purely technical, "to get out of dock." By this time Hurry was in the scow, and the Delaware had his rifles again in readiness. As the ark necessarily sailed before the wind, it had got by this time, quite two hundred yards from the castle, and was sliding away each instant, farther and farther, though with a motion so easy as scarcely to stir the water. The canoe of the girls was quite a quarter of a mile distant from the ark, obviously keeping aloof, in ignorance of what had occurred, and in apprehension of the consequences of venturing too near. They had taken

the direction of the eastern shore, endeavouring at the same time to get to windward of the ark, and in a manner between the two parties, as if distrusting which was to be considered a friend, and which an enemy. The girls, from long habit, used the paddles with great dexterity; and Judith, in particular, had often sportively gained races, in trials of speed with the youths that occasionally visited the lake.

When the three Hurons emerged from behind the palisades, and they found themselves on the open lake, and under the necessity of advancing unprotected on the ark, if they persevered in the original design, their ardour sensibly cooled. In a bark canoe, they were totally without cover, and Indian discretion was entirely opposed to such a sacrifice of life as would most probably follow any attempt to assault an enemy, entrenched as effectually as the Delaware. Instead of following the ark, therefore, these three warriors inclined towards the eastern shore, keeping at a safe distance from the rifles of Chingachgook. But this manœuvre rendered the position of the girls exceedingly critical. It threatened to place them if not between two fires, at least between two dangers, or what they conceived to be dan-

gers; and, instead of permitting the Hurons to enclose her, in what she fancied a sort of net, Judith immediately commenced her retreat, in a southern direction, at no very great distance from the shore. She did not dare to land; if such an expedient were to be resorted to at all, she could only venture on it, in the last extremity. At first the Indians paid little or no attention to the other canoe; for, fully apprised of its contents, they deemed its capture of comparatively little moment; while the ark, with its imaginary treasures, the persons of the Delaware and of Hurry, and its means of movement on a large scale, was before them. But this ark had its dangers as well as its temptations; and after wasting near an hour, in vacillating evolutions, always at a safe distance from the rifle, the Hurons seemed suddenly to take their resolution, and began to display it by giving eager chase to the girls.

When this last design was adopted, the circumstances of all parties, as connected with their relative positions, were materially changed. The ark had sailed and drifted quite half a mile, and was nearly that distance due north of the castle. As soon as the Delaware perceived that the girls avoided him, unable to manage

his unwieldy craft, and knowing that flight from a bark canoe, in the event of pursuit would be a useless expedient if attempted, he had lowered his sail, in the hope it might induce the sisters to change their plan, and to seek refuge in the scow. This demonstration produced no other effect than to keep the ark nearer to the scene of action, and to enable those in her to become witnesses of the chase. The canoe of Judith was about a quarter of a mile south of that of the Hurons, a little nearer to the east shore, and about the same distance to the southward of the castle, as it was from the hostile canoe, a circumstance which necessarily put the last nearly abreast of Hutter's fortress. With the several parties thus situated, the chase commenced.

At the moment when the Hurons so suddenly changed their mode of attack, their canoe was not in the best possible racing trim. There were but two paddles, and the third man was so much extra and useless cargo. Then the difference in weight, between the sisters and the other two men, more especially in vessels so extremely light, almost neutralized any difference that might proceed from the greater strength of the Hurons, and rendered the trial of speed far from being as unequal as it might

seem. Judith did not commence her exertions until the near approach of the other canoe rendered the object of the movement certain, and then she excited Hetty to aid her with her utmost skill and strength.

"Why should we run, Judith?" asked the simple-minded girl; "the Hurons have never harmed *me*, nor do I think they ever will."

"That may be true as to you, Hetty, but it will prove very different with me. Kneel down and say your prayer, and then rise, and do your utmost to help escape.—Think of me, dear girl, too, as you pray."

Judith gave these directions from a mixed feeling; first, because she knew that her sister ever sought the support of her Great Ally, in trouble; and next, because a sensation of feebleness and dependence suddenly came over her own proud spirit, in that moment of apparent desertion and trial. The prayer was quickly said, however, and the canoe was soon in rapid motion. Still, neither party resorted to their greatest exertions from the outset, both knowing that the chase was likely to be arduous and long. Like two vessels of war that are preparing for an encounter, they seemed desirous of first ascertaining their respective rates of speed, in order that they might know how to gradu-

ate their exertions previously to the great effort. A few minutes sufficed to show the Hurons that the girls were expert, and that it would require all their skill and energies to overtake them.

Judith had inclined towards the eastern shore at the commencement of the chase, with a vague determination of landing and flying to the woods, as a last resort; but as she approached the land, the certainty that scouts must be watching her movements, made her reluctance to adopt such an expedient unconquerable. Then she was still fresh, and had sanguine hopes of being able to tire out her pursuers. With such feelings she gave a sweep with her paddle, and sheered off from the fringe of dark hemlocks, beneath the shades of which she was so near entering, and held her way again, more towards the centre of the lake. This seemed the instant favourable for the Hurons to make their push, as it gave them the entire breadth of the sheet to do it in; and this, too, in the widest part, as soon as they had got between the fugitives and the land. The canoes now flew; Judith making up for what she wanted in strength, by her great dexterity and self-command. For half a mile the Indians gained no material advantage, but the continuance of so great exertions for

so many minutes sensibly affected all concerned. Here the Indians resorted to an expedient that enabled them to give one of their party time to breathe, by shifting the paddles from hand to hand, and this too, without sensibly relaxing their efforts. Judith occasionally looked behind her, and she saw this expedient practised. It caused her immediately to distrust the result, since her powers of endurance were not likely to hold out against those of men who had the means of relieving each other; still she persevered, allowing no very visible consequences immediately to follow the change.

As yet, the Indians had not been able to get nearer to the girls than two hundred yards, though they were what seamen would term "in their wake;" or in a direct line behind them, passing over the same track of water. This made the pursuit what is technically called a "stern chase," which is proverbially a "long chase;" the meaning of which is, that in consequence of the relative position of the parties no change becomes apparent, except that which is a direct gain in the nearest possible approach. "Long" as this species of chase is admitted to be, however, Judith was enabled to perceive that the Hurons were sensibly drawing

nearer and nearer, before she had gained the centre of the lake. She was not a girl to despair; but there was an instant when she thought of yielding, with the wish of being carried to the camp where she knew the Deerslayer to be a captive; but the considerations connected with the means she hoped to be able to employ, in order to procure his release, immediately interposed, in order to stimulate her to renewed exertions. Had there been any one there to note the progress of the two canoes, he would have seen that of Judith flying swiftly away from its pursuers, as the girl gave it freshly-impelled speed, while her mind was thus dwelling on her own ardent and generous schemes. So material, indeed, was the difference in the rate of going between the two canoes, for the next five minutes, that the Hurons began to be convinced all their powers must be exerted, or they would suffer the disgrace of being baffled by women. Making a furious effort, under the mortification of such a conviction, one of the stronger of their party broke his paddle at the very moment when he had taken it from the hand of a comrade to relieve him. This at once decided the matter; a canoe containing three men, and having but

one paddle, being utterly unable to overtake fugitives like the daughters of Thomas Hutter.

"There, Judith!" exclaimed Hetty, who saw the accident—"I hope, now, you will own that praying is useful! The Hurons have broke a paddle, and they never *can* overtake us."

"I never denied it, poor Hetty; and sometimes wish, in bitterness of spirit, that I had prayed more myself, and thought less of my beauty! As you say, we are now safe, and need only go a little south and take breath."

This was done; the enemy giving up the pursuit as suddenly as a ship that has lost an important spar, the instant the accident occurred. Instead of following Judith's canoe, which was now lightly skimming the water towards the south, the Hurons turned their bows towards the castle, where they soon arrived and landed. The girls, fearful that some spare paddles might be found in or about the buildings, continued on; nor did they stop, until so distant from their enemies as to give them every chance of escape, should the chase be renewed. It would seem that the savages meditated no such design, but at the end of an hour their canoe, filled with men, was seen quitting the castle and steering towards the

shore. The girls were without food, and they now drew nearer to the buildings and the ark, having finally made up their minds, from its manœuvres, that the latter contained friends.

Notwithstanding the seeming desertion of the castle, Judith approached it with extreme caution. The ark was now quite a mile to the northward, but sweeping up towards the buildings; and this, too, with a regularity of motion that satisfied Judith a white man was at the oars. When within a hundred yards of the building, the girls began to circle it in order to make sure that it was empty. No canoe was nigh, and this emboldened them to draw nearer and nearer, until they had gone entirely round the piles, and reached the platform.

"Do you go into the house, Hetty," said Judith, "and see that the savages are gone. They will not harm you, and if any of them are still here, you can give me the alarm. I do not think they will fire on a poor defenceless girl, and I at least may escape, until I shall be ready to go among them of my own accord."

Hetty did as desired—Judith retiring a few yards from the platform the instant her sister landed, in readiness for flight. But the last was unnecessary, not a minute elapsing before

Hetty returned to communicate that all was safe.

"I've been in all the rooms, Judith," said the latter, earnestly, "and they are empty, except father's; he is in his own chamber, sleeping, though not as quietly as we could wish."

"Has any thing happened to father?" demanded Judith, as her foot touched the platform; speaking quick, for her nerves were in a state to be easily alarmed.

Hetty seemed concerned, and she looked furtively about her, as if unwilling any one but a child should hear what she had to communicate, and even that *she* should learn it abruptly.

"You know how it is with father, sometimes, Judith," she said. "When overtaken with liquor he doesn't always know what he says, or does—and he seems to be overtaken with liquor, now."

"This is strange!—Would the savages have drunk with him, and then leave him behind? But 'tis a grievous sight to a child, Hetty, to witness such a failing in a parent, and we will not go near him till he wakes."

A groan from the inner room, however,

changed this resolution, and the girls ventured near a parent whom it was no unusual thing for them to find in a condition that lowers a man to the level of brutes. He was seated, reclining in a corner of the narrow room, with his shoulders supported by the angle, and his head fallen heavily on his chest. Judith moved forward with a sudden impulse, and removed a canvass cap that was forced so low on his head as to conceal his face, and, indeed, all but his shoulders. The instant this obstacle was taken away, the quivering and raw flesh, the bared veins and muscles, and all the other disgusting signs of mortality, as they are revealed by tearing away the skin, showed he had been scalped, though still living.

END OF VOL. II.

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